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NZ 지음
문어인간 일러스트

엘소드

타임 트러블

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eXtreme novel
학산문화사

It hurt.

I'm kneeling with both of my hands on the ground breathing unsightly.

There's sharp pain searing through my entire body. Blood continues to flow out of the wound that pierced through my chest. There's no point in calculating, I'll certainly die of blood loss like this.

Dynamos won't move anymore. Dammit.

"Kugh....."

I lost completely. A perfect defeat, a miscalculation. Once again, I was defeated.

"Don't joke with me...."

Blood spewed out of my mouth each time I spoke but I couldn't stand it. I couldn't accept this conclusion.

Then I'll just have to turn it back. No matter how many times it takes.

I raised my head after making my decision. A throne could be seen far away. It didn't have even a speck of dust on it amidst all this dust storm.

And a beautiful queen sat on that throne. Mechanical doll ever so close to a human being.

"Just you wait...!"

Still shaking, I stood up. I might die if I tried the jump with this body but it didn't matter.

If I lost this time, I just have to win next time.

"I'll come and get you for sure Eve!!"

Countless, innumerably.

To the point where there was no point in counting anymore.

I fight again,

Is defeated again,

And fail to reach her.

Even so, I start again.

A fight that I'm sure to lose.

He must have fallen asleep without realizing.

Add opened his eyes and habitually scratched his eye patch. He could feel the midday sunlight through the hood that covered most of his head.

"How much time has passed?"

"You were asleep for around one mealtime."

Add removed his hood to look up towards the source of the reply. The intense sunlight made him squint. Add saw a silhouette standing high above him. He was slightly taken aback but didn't let it show.

"Why are you standing up so high?"

The girl standing gently on top of tip of the spear smiled amiably.

"You never know when enemies might appear right? I'll be able to see further if I'm up higher."

Was her name....Ara? The girl showed such an innocent smile towards Add even though she had only known him since yesterday.

Just with a single glance you could tell she was a good natured and innocent girl. Those traits would probably make her likeable by most people. But Add wasn't too fond of her.

"I'll be able to see inside your skirt if you're up so high."

"Huh.....?!"

Ara's face reddened after hearing Add's remark. She hurriedly tried to pull down her clothes. But of course, she would lose balance if she tried to do that while standing on end of a standing spear.

"Kyaaaah!"

Flustered, Ara fell towards the ground. But contrary to her scream, she quickly performed a single somersault in mid-air and landed

safely on the ground.

Still, she looked quite shocked as she was blushing and breathing fast. Ara's face reddened even more when Add stood up as if nothing happened and started wiped the dust off his clothes.

"T, that was so mean Mr.Add! I was keeping watch while Mr.Add slept!"

"Why are you making such a fuss when you're wearing shorts?"



Receiving Add's blunt remark, Ara confirmed her own attire then breathed a sigh of relief. Her moment of relief didn't last long because she quickly pouted and asked Add.

"Were you making fun of me just now?"

"I said I'd be able to see inside your skirt, I never said you were wearing one."

Annoyed, Add replied accordingly and started to walk forward. Ara recovered her spear and followed Add as she diligently scouted the surrounding area.

They shouldn't need to go out of their way to be cautious since the two of them were standing in an open field.

'Well, you never know...'

Add let fly forwards one of his Dynamos. It was to scan the surrounding area.

Seeing Ara become amazed as she watched the Dynamo fly around made him feel a bit better.

His mood wasn't too great after waking from a good nap. But seeing Ara become so amazed at his creation gave him some pride as a developer.

"Kuku, there's no bandits around this area. We should move ahead."

"Others will be moving as well. Let us hurry so we don't fall behind!"

Ara tried to hasten her pace but Add gestured his hand to stop her.

"They are mere bandits. Others will be fine fighting on their own."

"Hmm? but.."

Ara looked surprised but Add was serious. Bandits here were all weaklings; there was honestly no need for everyone fighting together.

Even Add by himself. No, even this clumsy girl alone could defeat all the bandits in this area and complete their mission.

"All we have to do is look out for any that try to escape."

Ara naively believed what Add said and nodded. Then she returned to diligently scouting her surroundings again. Add assumed that the entire mission should have been resolved by now but didn't bother to tell her.

These bandits were weaklings that he could take care of with just one hand. That was why Add was lazing around and even finding the leisure to take a nap.

'Hm?'

Why did I assume bandits in this area would not be a problem again?

Add looked around the area to see if he had missed anything but only arrived at his original conclusion that he wasn't mistaken.

"...Well everyone is strong."

"Pardon me?"

"I was just talking to myself."

After replying bluntly to Ara, Add moved forwards while pushing away the tree branches in his way.

Even this empty headed girl was an individual with exceptional skill. You could tell even without having to fight her. Her aura and her ordinate posture... she was a person you couldn't underestimate.

Bam!

"Ow, owowow..."

Ara cried out when she was hit by one of the returning branches that Add had pushed aside to get past. She must have been too immersed with scouting the area that she was not aware of things in

front of her.

"...I, I'm fine! This is nothing!!"

"..."

....She is strong... right?

Add stared at Ara impersonally for a moment then turned around to continue moving forwards. It hasn't even been a day since they were formed, and this kind of mission meant nothing for him. But there was a good reason for Add to include himself in this group.

They were the El Search Party.

They were right now in the middle of their first mission to defeat the Ruben's bandits.

Just as Add had predicted, the bandits turned out to be bunch of pushovers.

"Haa, Hiya!!"

Ara had gone in front. Each time she swiftly swung her spear she sent three or four bandits flying.

Even though the fight was 1 versus 15 and she was surrounded by bandits from left to right, Ara dodged all of their attacks smoothly like the flowing water all the while effectively counterattacking.

Such elegant movements that looked as if she was dancing. Most people wouldn't be able to avert their gaze at such a spectacle.

"Yawn....."

But her teammate Add was watching her fight while yawning. It was 1 versus 15 because Add didn't join in the fight.

"I defeated everyone!"

In the end bandits' advantage in numbers didn't matter at all. They were all defeated before they could even graze a piece of Ara's clothing. Ara withdrew her spear and looked around with a troubled expression.

All of Ara's attacks were non-lethal attacks utilizing only the shaft of her spear. So these bandits were merely unconscious.

"What should we do about these people?"

"We can't move around with all of them, just leave them be."

"But our mission was to defeat the bandits.... Would it really be okay to leave them be?"

"Vermin tend to all scatter when their leader falls. Kukuk"

Ara nodded although she was still unsure what Add had meant. It almost seemed like she didn't realize how Add had left her alone to fight by herself.

'...Huh what's with this boring reaction?'

Her skill with the spear was astounding but she was way too naïve. Just in case, Add decided to purposely bring up the issue.

"So how did it feel to fight by yourself? Kukuk."

"Oh, it's been a while since got to move this much so it felt refreshing! It was quite thrilling and fun!"

"..."

She's not getting the point.

Add had purposely tried to get Ara riled up but only ended up getting an absurd response. This wasn't going to be very cool but let's try directly provoking her.

"I was resting comfortably while you were fighting. Kukuk."

"Were you able to rest well Mr.Add?"

"...."

Add's head started to ache after hearing Ara's innocent response. Wasn't it normal for you to get angry if your squad member did not do anything while you did all the fighting?

But Ara continued to retain her peaceful expression.

"Is she stupid? Or just really strange....?"

"Pardon me? What did you say?"

"It's nothing. We move forwards. Their boss should be deep inside the forest."

Dynamo he had sent flying earlier was informing him of the surrounding terrain. Add quickly stole a look back at Ara while moving forwards through the path that looked like it had been used by the bandits.

Ara was still looking around the surroundings nervously. It seemed the issue of Add letting her fight alone was completely erased from her mind already.

'.....is she an idiot?'

Her skill with the spear was great but she was unbelievably naive. Add had tried to peer into her mind to prepare for a case when she became an obstacle in the future....but it was futile.

"Still, something bugs me..."

"What do you mean? Did more bandits appear?"

Add ignored Ara who hurriedly tightened the grip on her spear. He got a strange sense that something was off whenever he stared at Ara. It made him uncomfortable to face her.... he still couldn't figure out why though.

For now let's just remember that she's an idiot who doesn't even know how get angry.

"Found them. They're fighting."

"Where? We should hurry up and go help!"

"We don't have to hurry for those weak opponents."

Ara tried to hasten herself but Add's steps didn't get any faster. Ara staring confusingly at him annoyed Add so he gave a reasonable reply.

"There might be other ambushes so we have to be careful."

"Oh. I see! I'll be careful too!"

Seeing Ara scan the surrounding trees with such serious expression was a bit funny but Add turned off all his attention towards her.

His main interest was right in front of him.

When Add and Ara leisurely moved forwards for about 50 meters, they finally came upon an open field. There were tens of bandits on the ground groaning in pain. In middle of those bandits, there stood a girl with the impressionable silver hair.

She stood expressionless in the middle of all the fallen bandits. It almost felt like she was void of any emotions. Even Ara who had tried to run over to her was startled for a moment.

But to Add that girl was an existence more beautiful than anything else in the world.

After walking up close to her to the point where he could tell the emotions from her eyes, Add stopped. Despite knowing that Add was approaching she just stared blankly.

"Kukuk"

"..."

An unpleasant expression passed through the girl's face for an instant in reaction to Add's laugh. But this reaction made Add even more thrilled.

An ability to read other person's emotions or intentions just from a laugh and output an appropriate reaction instantaneously..... in a machine!

This machine was so infinitely close to a human. The ultimate Nasod!

"Ms.Eve! Are you hurt?"

" ... "

While Add was feeling joyous inside, Ara who had been startled earlier hurriedly came running and asked the girl. Anyone could tell with a single glance that bandits weren't able to touch a single strand of this girl's hair. But it seemed Ara acted faster than her ability to examine the situation.

"There's no problem."

The girl called Eve, a target that Add had praised as an ultimate doll replied to Ara with a practical voice.

While Ara was letting out a sigh of relief, Eve suddenly turned her head and looked over to the other side of the field.

"But there seems to be a slight problem over there."

"Huh?"

Upon closer look.... Two people were facing off in the middle of the field. One was a boy with red hair and another was a one-eyed man with the large build.

They both looked extremely exhausted because they were both panting heavily without making a move.

"Y, you're not too bad old guy!"

"Y, you too brat!"

They were taking a slight break from their intense fight to recover their stamina. But the boy's shoulders were bleeding compared to the large man who had no visible injuries. It looked like the boy was at a disadvantage.

Ara quickly determined the boy's disadvantage and charged in front with her spear gripped tightly.

But even before she could take three steps, gears that were floating around Eve flew in and blocked Ara's path. Shocked, Ara stopped and turned towards Eve to protest.

"Ms.Eve?! Our comrade is in danger! We have to go help fast!"

"He said he wanted to fight by himself."

"But he looks exhausted."

Eve was silent to Ara's protest and continued to watch over the faceoff. Add gave his input after seeing Ara hop in anxiety.

"Leave him be. He said he wanted to fight alone. That brat will give up too if he loses here."

"But....!"

"What do you mean 'but' ? Kukuk, That brat is weak."

Amongst the current El Search Party members, that boy was the youngest and consequently the weakest. Everyone already knew this fact even though they had just formed yesterday.

"Or could you possibly be saying that that brat is strong?"

"T, that's...."

Ara's words trailed. She also seemed to realize that the boy's skills were nothing to brag about.

Martial artists could identify other martial artists. Even though Ara had such naïve personality, she was a trained martial artist. She could tell the difference between strong and weak.

"But what if he gets hurt badly...."

"You don't have to intervene."

Even Eve agreed with Add for some reason. Oh, she's rather easy to talk to? Add felt uplifted because Eve had agreed with him.

"Because I don't think he'll lose."

"EH?"

Ara looked honestly surprised but Eve just continued to stare at the boy with an unwavering gaze.

"That boy will win."

"Kukuk, really? That's totally not how I see it."

For her to make this kind of judgemental mistake... Add was displeased thinking that Eve had made a flawed judgement and proposed a counterargument.

"Anyone can tell he doesn't have much stamina left. Look, he barely has any more strength to hold up his sword."

Eve stiffly continued to watch despite Add's cynical remarks. Add was slightly irritated by Eve's lack of reaction so he sneakily sent his Dynamo forward.

Eve's gears came flying instantly to intercept the Dynamo.

"I told you to observe."

"I was just trying to help because he's going to lose like this."

Provocation that hadn't worked on Ara worked on Eve. Eve turned her head and stared at Add coldly.

"I don't think he will lose."

"If you honestly think that way, shall we make a little bet?"

"What kind of bet?"

"If that kid loses....."

Just when Add was about to bring up the terms of his bet, the boy gathered his breath and stood up straight while holding his great sword.

"Alright! That's enough break! Come at me Banthus!!"

"Don't make me laugh brat!!"

The boss of the bandits, man called Banthus, also gripped his weapon and fixed his form. The break was now over; they were both gathering their final strength to finish this fight.

"It wasn't me that defeated these bandits."

Eve's gaze averted from Add and returned to the red haired boy.

Red haired boy didn't realize that Eve, Ara and Add were watching him. His gaze was solely focused on the enemy in front of him.

The boy looked tired but he had a smile on his face.

"He said he will defeat them all by himself, and then defeat the boss by himself too."

Ara and even Add was slightly surprised. That young boy defeated the tens of bandits lying down here? But he clearly looked like he lacks the skills.... How did he?

Eve told them while still staring at the boy.

"He will win."

Add looked at Eve who continued to stare at the boy.

"He promised he will beat them all."

"Here I come!!!"

The red haired boy, Elsword charged at Banthus with a shout.

"Bring it on!!"

Responding to Elsword's charge, Banthus shouted as well and swung his sword down with a

powerful force. With their difference in size, even getting grazed by Banthus's attack will be fatal for Elsword.

"Ha!"

But Elsword continued to charge forwards without any fear of the sword falling above him. The moment when Banthus made a victorious smile.....Elsword changed the beat of his steps and threw himself forwards deeply.

Thud!

Because of Elsword's miraculous front roll, Banthus's sword hit nothing but the ground. His expression now shrouded in fear, Banthus hurriedly tried to pull his sword up and turn around. But Elsword was faster.

"Flame Geyser!"

With a shout, Elsword's blade hit the ground; the ground cracked and crimson flames gushed out.

"Uwooh! T, this is? magic?!"

Banthus had expected to defend against a sword attack. He widened his eyes and tried to back up.

But his reaction was too late to completely avoid the attack.

"Kuu kaagh!"

Banthus screamed as his body was roasted by the flames. Then he kneeled on the ground and panted. Elsword also looked very tired because he just performed an overburdening front roll maneuver with a bleeding wound on his shoulder. But he was still clearly standing on his two feet.

It was clear who had won.

"See, I won!"

"Don't make me laugh. I was just playing around and got caught off guard."

Clenching his teeth, Banthus tried his best to get up but he no longer had any more strength left to fight. Elsword shook his head in annoyance while leaning his sword against his shoulder.

"Give back the El you stole and reflect on your actions."

"Do you really think I'll hand over the El to you guys after all the trouble I went through to get it?"

"Kahaha, it ended up like this today because I was careless. But just you wait next time.... That is of course if there is a next time."

"Where do you think can run off to? The match is already...."

"Go!!!"

With Banthus's shout, something popped out from the forest and charged towards Elsword.

Surprised, Elsword instinctively swung his sword to hit the target.

"W, what?"

Elsword was sure he defeated all the other bandits! But... the target wasn't human. He had first thought it was a Phoru.... But that wasn't it either.

It was a Nasod.

"What? Why is a Nasod..."

No time to think. He must dodge the Nasod's attack. Elsword quickly moved out of the way but the Nasod continued to track and charge recklessly at Elsword. This Nasod's main method of attack was tackling.

Elsword dodged left and right while swinging his sword. But Elsword was too exhausted to deal significant damage to it.

"Kahahahaha!!"

Banthus was using this chance to run away. That coward! I had him beat!

"Stop right there!"

Elsword's attention diverted to Banthus and the Nasod didn't miss this opportunity. The Nasod was already in front of Elsword by the time he noticed it charging full speed towards him.

I'm going to get hit!!

"That was pathetic!!"

Just when Elsword shut his eyes to prepare for the upcoming impact, gears suddenly flew in and struck the Nasod multiple times to fling it away from Elsword. The Nasod convulsed and exploded after hitting the ground. After narrowly avoiding the danger, Elsword muttered grudgingly

"I could have beaten it by myself."

"You would have lost like that."

Eve, who had just saved Elsword gave her cold evaluation. Elsword was about to protest that he could have won by himself but closed his mouth after seeing Ara and Add come towards them.

Others also saw him getting helped out of danger. It was embarrassing.

"Mr.Elsword, that was impressive! Predicting the enemy's movement and dodging like that!"

"It was nothing."

Elsword responded bluntly to Ara's honest compliments. He had beaten Banthus but couldn't win against the Nasod that appeared afterwards.

The joy of victory had already left the boy's heart.

"No, it was really impressive! You'll become stronger in no time like this!"

"I still have ways to go...."

Ara and Elsword were having this kind of conversation. But Add wasn't listening.

His attention was solely focused on the Nasod that just attacked Elsword.

Add squinted his eyebrows while picking up the Nasod's fragments.

".....What's this Nasod doing here?"

"It's a Nasod miner but I'm not sure why it's here."

"Strange. A mere bandit commanding a Nasod? That should not be...."

Add was about to say something to Eve but stopped. He had all his Dynamos with him right now.

That was clearly a mistake.

It should have been standard procedure to scout the area for

additional enemies whenever a new enemy appeared. He could already feel various presences on other side of those bushes.

Around tens of enemies. They were surrounded.

"Kukukuk, it doesn't matter. I'll figure out after destroying them all."

Eve was already mobilizing her gears. Ara also noticed the situation and fixed her spear. They couldn't expect anything from Elsword who was already too exhausted.

"Ara, protect the brat."

"Who's a brat?! Don't look down on me!"

"You messing about will just get in our way. Know your place."

Furious, Elsword tried to get up but he had no strength left to do so. Add didn't give an eye to Elsword panting in vexation and spoke to Eve.

"What will you do? You can stay with the brat if you want."

"That's not for you to decide."

Judging by her cold response, Eve must have realized Add was making fun of her. But that kind of response made Add even more delighted.

A normal machine, a normal Nasod could only make singular simple decisions. However, Eve clearly had a will of her own.

"Then come with me. Let's enjoy sweeping through them all. Kukuk."

Nasods charged towards the group soon as Add declared the start of battle.

Add wasn't even slightly startled when enemies appeared out of the bushes. He instead increased the output of his Dynamos. A shockwave created from bending and cracking of space swept over the Nasods.

Following Add's hand gestures and instructions, Dynamos fired a shockwave that destroyed the Nasods. After making short work of 10 Nasods by himself Add looked behind him.

"Explosion Impact!!"

Eve shouted and swung her whip. An explosion engulfed and destroyed all the Nasods in front of her. Ara who was beside Elsword also easily dispatched the Nasods coming up behind her with a swing of her spear.

"This is too boring..."

20 Nasod Miners that just ambushed them were all destroyed before they could even touch anyone.

Add sighed and examined the remains of the Nasod Miners.

"What are you doing?"

"Examination, kukuk. Shouldn't we figure out why these things were working with the bandits?"

Eve was staring at him repulsively but Add continued to examine the Nasod remains without any concern.

He hasn't encountered any Nasods from 'this age' before but machines all tended to follow a functional structure.

"These don't have any cogitative abilities. They can only do a simple job, digging to be precise. Thus, they couldn't have carried out orders unless someone had instructed them.... Not having cogitative abilities should also mean they couldn't carry out complex orders...."

Add was pondering bunch of possibilities then all of a sudden.... he grinned. The ground was shaking.

"Kukuk. Now this is more like it."

"It's a giant enemy."

Eve must have realized the abnormally too as she moved in besides

Add. While staring at Eve's sides Add abruptly asked.

"Isn't Nasods destroying other Nasods fratricide?"

"They are currently following wrong orders."

He had poked a bit to see if Eve would get disturbed but there was no particular reaction. Come to think of it, this machine.... Although she displayed high level of decision making, he had never seen her express any emotions.

"Do you have any emotions?"

"I don't need something so unnecessary."

Eve sharply cut off the issue. Add was honestly surprised this time. No way. She can even lie? Add couldn't even begin to fathom how similar this machine was to a human.

"Let's stop the small talk here. Something annoying seems to have arrived."

WRRRRRR!!! They could hear the mixed sounds of caterpillar tracks and rotation of a drill. Pushing through the forest, destroying all the trees in its path was the culprit that had ordered the ambush attack earlier.

It was a Nasod Driller.

Add let out a slight laugh looking at the giant spinning drill. There was no reason to be afraid of such a primitive weapon. Only problem here was that it was commanding bunch of Nasod miners.....

"I'll take care of the drill; you take care of the others."

"It's dangerous, I recommend tactical retreat."

"Stop nagging. Kukuk, There's no way I'd get beaten by them."

Add declared arrogantly and moved his Dynamos. Nasod Driller's drill started to spin more roughly as a response.

"Go!"

Upon Add's command Dynamos expelled energy to shatter the space and destroyed a portion of the Driller's body.

Witnessing that their boss was damaged, all the Nasod miners charged at Add.

"Illusion Strike!!"

Eve made copies of her gears and fired them at the miners. But there were too many to filter them all for Add. Add was slightly startled when all the Miners ignored Eve and only charged at him. But Add still managed control his Dynamos in response.

"Void Field!!"

Alternate space opened up around Add and all the Nasods charging at him stopped at once. This ability to unfold alternate space allowed him to restrain his enemies temporarily and attack safely meanwhile.

"Hmph..... Small fries."

Add had expected them to split up since Eve was here as well. He didn't expect all of them to focus only on him. Just when Add was about to close the alternate space for his next move, he heard a strange noise.

Beep. Beep. Beep.

The sound was coming from Nasod miners that got close to him earlier but were stopped by Void Field.

A chilling sense of danger ran down Add's spine as he quickly tried to dodge but it was too late.

Booom!!

Nasod Miners self destructed causing a large explosion!! Not just one but 5 self destructed at once and encased Add with an explosion.

"Mr.Add!!"

Add could hear Ara raising her voice from far away but didn't turn around to look. He had managed to fall back and minimize the damage with the Dynamo's emergency defense mechanism. But the arms he used to cover his face were still hurting.

"Kukuk. I didn't think they'd be able to self destruct...."

It was a mistake brought on by lack of information. Did they not use self destruct earlier because....they wanted to use it as a trump card?

Just who could have come up with that kind of plan?

WRRRRR!

That piece of junk spinning its drill loudly came up with this kind of psychological plan? Add couldn't believe his own conclusion but this wasn't the time to be indecisive. Nasod miners were attacking again.

The Driller wasn't standing idly as well. It was periodically shooting spitfire bombs out of its battery towards Add. There were too many things to pay attention to.

"Tch!"

He'll get caught up by self destruction if he took out the miners carelessly! Add was focusing on gaining distance from the miners for now but there were too many.

"Explosion Impact!!"

Eve must have gotten to the same conclusion as Add because she was handling them from a distance as she dashed away and took them out with an explosion from her whip. But there were way more Nasods jumping out of the bushes than the two of them could defeat.

"Just how many are left?"

"I don't know. We have to retreat!"

Nasod Miners were now numbering roughly over 100. They weren't

much of a problem by

themselves but there was no answer to them if they attacked in such massive numbers.

After destroying two more Nasod miners Add replied sarcastically.

"Retreat? Kukuk to where?"

"....."

Eve who had suggested the idea couldn't respond. They couldn't flee to town with all of these on their tail. Not only that, unlike humans, Nasods didn't tire and it would be very disadvantageous for them if it became a long chase.

Suddenly the group of Nasod miners that were attempting to tackle the two of them split into two sides. Nasod driller charged in with its drill facing forwards through the newly created gap.

Busy with dodging miners' tackles, watching out for self destructions and all the while trying to attack... Add and Eve was occupied with so many things that the Driller's appearance put them in a desperate situation.

"Ugh?!"

Driller was surprisingly quick despite its huge size. Add quickly got on top of his Dynamos and attempted to dodge by using low flight but...

Bump!

In a ridiculous turn of events Add and Eve's bodies collided with one another. It was a disaster that was brought on because both of them were too focused on dodging the Driller's attack and hadn't watched out for each other's trajectory.

"Kugh!"

Eve who had the smaller stature couldn't withstand the impact and was thrown off her feet. Nasods didn't miss this opportunity and all jumped towards Eve.

If their tackle worked that was fine. If Eve resisted they'd just self destruct!

"How dare you!?"

Add instinctively jumped in front of Eve and raised the output of the Dynamos to break the space in front of him. Some of the miners were destroyed to the point where they couldn't self destruct, but others were only mildly damaged and started to make the countdown noise.

I'll get swept up by the explosion if I don't dodge.

"Kugh..."

But Eve was behind him right now. Without additional thoughts Add put all the Dynamos in front of him and raised their outputs.

He'll be able to mitigate some of the physical shock using the Dimension Distortion mode.

"Uuugh. How dare they....!"

Boom! Boom! Add shouted as all the Nasod miners self destructed in a chain reaction. The shock was so great that it transferred over from the Dynamo's barrier and shook his hands.

Other Miners must have thought this was a great opportunity because Add who had been dodging all their attacks was now stopped in one place. Now even normal undamaged Nasods were charging in towards Add and self destructing.

They'll break though soon!

"Hurry! Get up!"

Eve who had fallen earlier asked as she got up.

"Why didn't you just leave me and dodge?"

"That's because..."

Of course Add didn't protect Eve from the explosion out of good will.

Eve was the most perfect work amongst all the Nasods he had seen so far. There's no way he'd let such a masterpiece get damaged.

"Kukuk, why do you care?"

Boom! Boom! The barrier was shaking from the explosions even as two of them talked. They won't be able to last long judging by how the Dynamo's output was decreasing rapidly.

Blocking physical shocks wasn't even Dimension Distortion mode's main feature in the first place.

Determined, Add looked back at Eve.

"Listen carefully. I'll stop defending on the count of three. At that moment, use the strongest attack you have to trash them all at once. Can you do it?"

Switching from Dimension Distortion mode into Normal Mode, in other words for him to be able to attack with his Dynamos again it required 1 second of idle time. Leaving 1 second of idle time was too dangerous against these suicidal Nasods at the moment.

"It's possible."

Eve replied without any hesitation. Just when Add was about to start the countdown....

Enormous shock that he hadn't felt before ran through the Dynamos.

WRRRR!!

Nasod Driller was now drilling into the barrier. It must have judged that self destruction of the miners weren't enough.

Dimensional Distortion won't be able to handle an attack stronger than the previous attacks.

"No time. Starting now!"

Add was doubtful if Eve could really be able to take care of all the Nasod Miners and now also the Nasod Driller with a single attack.

But he was using all his Dynamos for defense at the moment so he had no choice.

He'll have to bet on this small chance.

"One, Two!!"

Along with Add's shout, just when Eve was about to release the power of her gears, a sound of tearing wind sped past across their ears.....and everything went silent.

Nasod Driller's drill stopped spinning. It was frozen solid.

Not only the Nasod driller, but all the Nasod miners that were trying to throw their bodies to break the Dimension Distortion were all frozen as well. Add couldn't comprehend this current situation but quickly used this chance and changed from the Distortion mode into Normal Mode.

A cheerful voice came from far away.

"Hey, are you guys hurt?"

A beautiful Elf with green hair was quickly dashing towards them. Tens of Nasods freezing instantly must have been her doing.

Shatter!

But it looked like the duration wasn't very long because all the ice flew off as the Driller's drill started to spin again. All the miners were also unfrozen.

Miners must have decided Rena who had fired that freezing arrow just now was a significant threat because all of the Nasod miners started to charge towards Rena. Nasod Driller will face Add and Eve while miners kept Rena at bay.

Add raised his voice without realizing it himself.

"Be careful!! Those things self dest....."

Pew! Pew! Pew!

Seeing the Nasod miners come towards her, Rena who had been

running full speed towards Add and Eve changed her direction and started run sideways. Without slowing down, she fired an arrow with each step she took without a break. Nasod miners fell and got destroyed with each arrow she fired.

Some arrows even pierced through three of them at once. It was like watching leaves get blown away by the wind.

Rena finally stopped running and asked after defeating all of the Nasod miners without letting any of them get close to her.

"Hm? Add? What should I be careful of again?"

"....You don't have to."

Add had known Rena was strong but hadn't imagined she possessed this much skill. A cold voice came from behind Add as he stood stunned with surprise.

"Move, you're in the way."

Eve moved forwards and made a swing with her whip.

Nasod Driller was hesitating due to all the Nasod miners getting defeated so quickly. Eve's whip was able to wrap around the Driller with ease and hit it directly with chain of explosions.

WRRRWRRRWRRRR!!

But its drill was still spinning and judging by how there was a red orb of energy forming in front of it, it was trying to use a new attack.

"Too slow. Void Field!!"

Following behind Eve, Add unfolded the alternate space again. After restraining the target so it couldn't dodge, Add stretched out his hand towards the Nasod Driller that was still trying to gather up a red energy orb.

"I'm much faster!"



The space in front of Add was shattered when he opened his clenched fist. Nasod Driller that was inside that space got shattered as well. But it didn't end with just one shattered space. The space near Nasod Driller was shattered multiple times until its body was in tatters. Add declared towards the Nasod Driller that was now unrecognizably broken.

".....Void Impact."

A giant explosion was created.

The fight was over and it was now night time.

El Search Party members decided it was too late to go back to town and prepared to camp outside for the night. Dinner was handled with simple foods they prepared before they left Ruben.

The gang set up a campfire and sat around it. Only Add was sitting away from everyone by himself with his back against a tree.

He had a drill fragment in his hand. Because it had exploded into so many fragments there was nothing that remained relatively intact that could be examined.

"Hmph..."

Dissatisfied, Add stared at the fragment in his hand. Just what was the meaning of this? Banthus, a mere bandit had a hidden army of Nasod Miners and also a Nasod Driller?

If Banthus had them at his disposal, why didn't he use them earlier? No, if he had such a huge army why was he still a petty bandit?

Things didn't make sense and it displeased Add.

As Add was muttering to himself someone who was sitting near the fireplace stood up.

"Is something worrying you?"

Rena asked as she came near. But Add impertinently asked Rena to confirm something.

"Where is that left hand Nasod?"

"If you're talking about Raven he went to escort the captured bandits to town. It might take some time so we decided to meet up again in Elder."

"Kukuk, too bad. That left arm was nice to look at."

Add let out a small laugh. Seeing this, Rena smiled softly.

"Is something worrying you?"

"..."

Add hesitated for a moment at the repeated question but showed her the fragment in his hand.

"This is a fragment of that Nasod we fought earlier. Don't you think it's strange?"

"What do you mean?"

"The request we got was to retrieve the El that bandit called Banthus stole. But Nasods appeared all of a sudden. How can a mere bandit command Nasods?"

"Hm. I guess you're right."

Add frowned upon Rena's carefree response. Add knew very well that she was much stronger than him but how could she be so easygoing?

But Add changed his evaluation of her after hearing her next words.

"Raven is going to ask about the Nasods when he gets back to Ruben so you shouldn't have to worry too much."

"....Kuku, I wasn't worried. I was just frustrated because it didn't make sense."

Raven and Rena must have had the same question as Add and had decided to look into it by themselves. El Search Party was comprised of bizarre individuals but Rena felt the most reliable amongst them.

Not only was her fighting skill was great, but she also had great

judgement.

They could talk on the same page. Add felt a bit better.

"Ah, come to think of it you were protecting Eve earlier right?"

"Kukuk, was I? I don't quite remember."

Without realizing it himself Add glossed over the question that was abruptly thrown at him. Rena made a helpless smile for a moment then shrugged.

"Eve doesn't show her expressions too much but she must be thankful to you. Try talking to her later."

"...You act like you know a lot when you've only known her for a day."

Amongst the El Search Party members, only people that knew each other before they formed were Rena&Raven and Elsword&Eve. For Ara and Add everyone here were new faces.

Thus Rena had only met Eve yesterday. But the way she spoke felt like she knew everything about Eve.

"Girls around that age are complicated. I know you're interested her but this big sis is gonna to scold you if you tease her too much, got it?"

Rena poked Add's forehead with her fingertip. Rena was misunderstanding completely but it was tiresome to argue back so Add kept his mouth shut.

Rena smiled and was about to head back to the campfire. She forced Add to promise something before she left.

"Girls will now go wash together. You better not peep. Got it?"

"Kukuk, Why would I do something so useless?"

I'd just do more research If I had such time.

Rena took off with Ara and Eve to go bathe. Raven wasn't here right now so only Elsword and Add remained.

Add stared silently at Elsword with both hands behind his head.
You could see the boy's
disheartened face across the campfire.

"You're looking as if the world had just ended."

Following Add's gesture a single Dynamo flew in front of Elsword's nose. Because of the Dynamo abruptly flying in, Elsword who was deep in thought staggered and instinctively grabbed his sword.

"What are you doing? Put it away!"

"Kukuk, are you scared?"

Add laughed as the Dynamo spun in circles around Elsword.

"Are you picking a fight?"

"Kukuk."

Add retracted the Dynamo when Elsword finally stood up in frustration. Elsword continued to glare at him in anger so Add sighed in response and spoke.

"Kids should act like kids. It's unsightly to see you sulking like that."

"Who's sulking?"

"I knew from the start you're a type that speaks out everything on your mind without thinking. But you never said a word since that time so you must be sulking. Kukuk."

If Rena was here she would have obviously stopped this quarrel. But all the girls had left to bathe.

Even Raven who was oldest amongst the guys was gone.

There were only two of them right now.

"You must have realized how weak you are from today. Give up and go home."

"..."

Elsword clenched his fists and shook in frustration. Add nodded in satisfaction after seeing Elsword's reaction.

"Kids are fine staying as kids. Just don't get in the way of those around you."

Elsword and Eve already knew each other so Elsword could become an obstacle when Add

attempted to obtain Eve later. It would be wise to get rid of him beforehand. That and Add wasn't too fond of Elsword. In Add's eyes Elsword was too young and always acted rashly without thinking.

"I'm....weak right now."

"Hmph, you finally get your place."

I can finally say goodbye to this eyesore of a brat. While Add was smiling gleefully, Elsword held his sword tightly and shouted.

"That's why I'll become stronger! So that I won't lose to anyone!"

"...."

Add was at a loss for words at this unexpected response. But Elsword was already walking away towards the forest. Add asked instinctively.

"It's already night, where are you going?"

"I'm going to train. Don't follow me."

Elsword spoke in a sharp voice and walked off. Well, his pride must be hurting after being directly pointed out how weak he was.

"Tch, things got more annoying...."

Elsword was weak, young and most of all... stubborn. Add couldn't see how Eve had managed to stick around with this guy.

"Sigh....."

Add also got up. It was boring alone so he was going to take a walk while thinking about his future plans.

Of course, towards the opposite direction of where Elsword went.

The forest at night was different from the day. One could easily get lost if they weren't careful. But this didn't worry Add. He could just send out his Dynamos to do a terrain scan.

"What should I do now...."

He arrived at 'this age' and somehow managed to join a strange group called the El Search Party. He was planning to spend his days quietly while gathering more information about 'this age'..... but he ended up finding masterful mechanical doll called Eve.

He knew from the moment he saw her. Neither in the past or in the future there never was and will be a Nasod that's superior to her.

"I want it...."

Add instinctively murmured as he thought of Eve. But he had to admit, it definitely won't be an easy task. Add's wish was to dissect Eve's core and investigate it. Then also find out more about her anatomy.... The main problem was the Core.

For Nasods, the Core was akin to human's heart. Nasods will go into a state that's like death if their Core got damaged.

It was obvious Eve would object to Add's wishes.

Not only that. As Add had witnessed today, Eve's battle capabilities were rather impressive. Even Add couldn't easily assure he'd come out victorious. And Elsword will no doubt take Eve's side.....

"The others are a problem too..."

It would work out if he had Rena and Raven on his side but they didn't look like people who'd do that. If Add attempted to steal Eve's Core which was basically her life then tried to dissect her body, those two would obviously try to stop him.

Moreover, the two of them were way stronger than Add. The feat Rena had displayed earlier today was remarkable and it didn't even

feel like she had shown the full extent of her skills.

"I need someone on my side..."

By process of elimination only Ara remains. Should he trick that dense girl into helping him obtain Eve?

Add was dumbfounded by his own thought process but this was the only conclusion he could get considering the situation.

"Well I guess I could use her as bait. Kukuk."

Anyways, he must obtain Eve.

By obtaining Eve and analysing her, Add will be able to improve his tech. Which in turn will greatly help him achieve his 'true goal'.

"For now let's bide for the right time...."

After organizing his thoughts Add was about to bring back his Dynamos to head back. But he stopped. Dynamos were sending him a signal that they had detected a human presence.

"A bandit that's still hiding.....?"

They should have captured all of the Banthus's bandits and Raven should have escorted all of them to Ruben. It looked like they had missed one.

"Well fine.... Something useful might come out of this."

He might be able to find out how Banthus was able to command Nasods by interrogating this bandit. Add started to follow the Dynamo's signal.

SplashSplashSplash

He could hear the sound of river flowing.

"Hm?"

Wait a moment! Rena took all the girls with her to take a bath. Add just recalled this fact but the Dynamos were only detecting a single presence.

There's no way someone would still be bathing alone.

"Kukuk, I'll figure out when I'm there."

Unlike the confident way he spoke, Add quietly reduced the sound of his footsteps as he climbed down the hill.

It was extremely unlikely, but he didn't want there to be any misunderstandings. It was for the future.

It was advantageous for him that these party members trusted him much as possible. It was for the perfect execution of his kidnap Eve scenario! It's not like he was particularly interested in female body!

Pushing through the branches in his way, Add unconsciously brought up various excuses in his head while climbing down the hill. This was a mistake!

Slip!!

Normally he'd continuously scan the area with Dynamos so this wouldn't happen. But the rock Add had stepped on as he climbed down was extremely slippery.

His left feet flew into the air. Then as he lost balance his right feet flew into the air as well.

"Uwaaah?!"

It turned out so that Add had just lunged himself off the cliff. Add was tremendously shocked but quickly manipulated his Dynamos. The immediate danger made it so he couldn't think clearly.....

Add desperately brought the Dynamos close to him much as

possible.

By increasing the Dynamo's output he could stand on them and levitate. The question was if he could succeed before he crashed into the ground.

"There's no way that my calculations will fail!!"

Add clenched his teeth and quickly moved his Dynamos. He was able to succeed by leaving 30cm between him and the ground.

"Phew....."

Standing on the levitating Dynamos Add let out a sigh of relief. For him to make such a mistake because he was too deep in thought....

"Kukuk, well I came down the hill in one go. It saved some time."

It wasn't bad since he used the mistake and turned it into a good result. While Add was reeling himself in from the startling experience, he heard a chilling voice.

"It was a perfect night to bathe alone so I was befriending the moon..... but a boy fell from the sky."

It was a voice of a girl. Add instinctively swung his Dynamos and turned around. His face stiffened.

The girl standing in the river was naked.

"....."

What should he do? He wanted to run away.



“혼자 씻기 껴적한 밤이라서 달을 벗삼고 있었는데……
소년이 떨어졌군.”

"It was a perfect night to bathe alone so I was befriending the moon..... but a boy fell from the sky."

She was someone he'd never met before. Add froze in place after seeing naked female body for the first time. Any room for composed thought was gone. Only artistic evaluations popped up in his mind.

It was a very beautiful body. Her breasts looked nice and ripe; her smooth abdomen didn't have any extra skin. To sum it up it was a well trained body that overflowed with feminine charm.

But those 9 tails, white hair and the blood red eyes looked extremely eerie.....

"Whara?"

"You probably meant Ara."

The girl spoke in a composed manner without trying to hide her body. This should have been an embarrassing situation but Add couldn't believe his eyes.

The girl in front of him was..... Ara Haan. The same unreliable girl who possessed exceptional spearmanship but had a dense personality.

But this white haired Ara had an oddly disturbing feeling about her. Her personality had changed completely.

"Who are you?"

"Before I explain who I am shouldn't you do something about this situation? Or do you desire to stare longer?"

White haired Ara spoke while still not bothering to hide her body.

Add's face reddened after he realized what he was doing. He quickly spun around while putting his hood on tightly and plunged his hands into his pockets.

"Kukuk....."

Ara made an eerie laugh behind him but Add didn't look back.

'Just what.... Is that?'

He wasn't startled because it was the first time he had seen a female's bare body. No, that actually did startle him quite a bit too! But the more important issue was that this Ara was completely different from Ara during the day. Their faces were same but he couldn't see two of them as same individuals.

'Girls change at night? Girls have two faces?'

Add tried to theorize bunch of possibilities but none of them gave him a satisfactory answer. He wondered if the odd sense that something was off whenever he saw Ara could have been this.....

Well, he didn't know what was going on but he'll figure it out by interrogating the person in question! After confirming that the sound of splashing water behind him had stopped, Add peeked around his back.

"Why are you still not wearing anything!?"

"I am viewing the moon."

Still naked, white haired Ara was looking towards the night sky staring at the moon. Sure it was a beautiful full moon..... but-

"...Hurry up and wear something!!"

He saw it again. Add shouted furiously as he hid his reddened face deep inside his hood. Ara laughed in amusement and the sound of moving water was heard.

"Kukuk. Fine...I'll leave it at that. Since the boy that darkness has gifted me urges me to do so, I should comply."

"....."

Add was aggravated inside but there was nothing he could do. All he could do was pledge to himself that when she wore clothes, soon as she wore clothes there will be no mercy.

"Ah but it is such a waste to not view the stars."

"Hurry up and get dressed!!"

Add shouted but he couldn't feel any movement from Ara behind him. Add finally remembered about the Dynamo's scouting feature and used it. Ara still wasn't moving from the water.

She must really be viewing the stars.

"...."

Was she not embarrassed being naked with a guy in front of her? He couldn't imagine this was the same Ara who had been embarrassed only because she thought Add had seen her underwear despite the fact that she was wearing shorts.

"Ughhh...."

The questions grew in his head and the time was passing by but there was nothing Add could do. He couldn't risk looking back Ara's naked body again so he couldn't threaten or attack her. There was no choice but to control his temper and wait for Ara to wear clothes again.

Add waited. It felt like he'd become a stone.

It took another 30 minutes for the white haired Ara to get dressed. Add was about to break the silence now that they could talk face to face, But Ara laughed first in a low voice.

She was mocking him.

"Kukuk. Was it your first time seeing a female's body? You were so embarrassed that you looked like a totally different person from the day."

"..."

Add didn't answer as he surrounded Ara with his Dynamos. It was so he could get the upper hand.

"What are you?"

"I'm Ara Haan, member of the El Search Party and the girl who teamed up with you during the day."

"...Don't lie to me."

Her face was same as Ara. No, the body was Ara Haan's but she was a completely a different individual right now. He couldn't explain but he was sure of this fact.

Strange. She felt rather familiar and this made Add uneasy.

"Who are you and what did you do to me?"

"My, this coming from a boy who leapt out at me when I was bathing? Have you been bewitched by my charms? This is troublesome indeed."

"...Speak"

Dynamos started to exert energy in response to Ara's mischievous retort. He had to know about her identity even if it meant resorting to forceful means.

"Then shall we stop the foolery here?"

White haired Ara stopped smiling and explained with a serious expression.

"This is Ara Haan's body but as you can see I'm not Ara. I am frost fox Eun who accompanies Ara."

"...Frost fox?"

Girl who revealed herself as Eun waved her 9 tails as if to show Add.

"You can call me either sacred beast or a spectre. It doesn't matter which one. Anyways, I have been lending Ara my strength from time to time. This form is called the Celestial Fox mode."

"...Did a demon take over her body?"

Add finally understood the situation. It seemed like this suspicious being was controlling the dense girl's body however it wanted.

"No, while I do often get misunderstood for that and that I could actually take over if I wanted, I normally only lend my powers and do not dominate the body. Ara specially lent her body to me today."

"....."

He couldn't trust everything Eun said but Add now understood the situation and withdrew his Dynamos.

Was it called possession? It clearly looked like Ara was meddling with something dangerous but that was Ara Haan's business.

"What were you doing borrowing her body?"

It didn't really matter to Add but she might turn out to be a hindrance to him later on. He had to know of her intents.

"Bathing. Even if it wasn't with my own body, I wanted to try it personally. So Ara kindly distanced herself from the other two for me. Then the boy appeared."

"....."

So even that empty headed Ara had such a surprising secret. Although mere possession was nothing compared to Add's secret.

"Okay. Then...."

"I'll say it right now; it doesn't matter if you reveal this to the others. So it's useless trying to use this information as a threat."

".....I didn't think about that."

Before, Add had planned to get Ara on his side when he attempted to steal Eve's core. But things become completely different if this weird thing is with her. This fox called Eun felt elderly and overflowed with composure. She wasn't someone that could be taken lightly.

"Well then let's just go...."

Add was about to suggest to Eun that she should give Ara back her body so they could return to the camp. But Add shut his mouth

abruptly.

Eun was staring at him with an extremely mournful gaze.

Gaze so sad that you couldn't imagine it was coming from a face that was joking and seriously introducing herself a moment ago.

With her voice deep in remorse,

"I'll lend you my strength."

She declared lopsidedly.

Add was overcome for a moment by the heart wrenching expression that Eun just showed him. He shook his head in order to come back to his senses. He didn't know what kind of trick she used but he couldn't let her push him around.

But as if she could see through Add's thoughts.

"So that you can obtain Eve in your hands"

Eun made a proposal that Add definitely couldn't refuse.

Elder was a city incomparably busier than Ruben.

El Search Party members couldn't hide their amazement at Elder's wide streets and its sheer amount of people. Elsword who was the youngest was mind numbingly looking around. Eve was also looking at the all the people with a very intrigued gaze.

Then Eve's gaze met with Add's..... Eve coldly ignored him. It could have been just Add's imagination but Eve seemed to be even more on guard towards him than before.

"Okay, then I'll go talk with Mr.Hoffman so....."

Hoffman was greatest merchant in Elder and was a close friend of Ruben's chief. El Search Party had the Ruben's chief's letter of recommendation so they were hoping to find Banthus' whereabouts with Hoffman's help.

'But everyone going to meet him together would be ineffective....'

Rena thought to herself while looking over the gang. Then she appointed Add.

"Add, keep an eye on the kids for me so they won't get lost okay?"

"Why do I have to....."

Add muttered but Rena's helpless smile made him turn around to look at the other members.

Eve and Elsword were out of their minds, Ara's eyes were also shining with amazement, her fists clenched tightly.

"This is my first time seeing a street like this! So splendid!"

""

Raven was gone and if Rena was gone too, the person with the highest mental age in this group was....Add.

Rena grinned when she saw Add sigh deeply.

"Don't look so down. If you do a good job watching over the kids I'll give you a reward later."

"Kukuk, you're treating me like a kid too.... It's displeasing."

Add openly expressed his reluctance but Rena made a mischievous smile then spoke abruptly.

"I know you want to be alone with Ara but you can't be too hasty."

".....Why would you say something so strange like that?"

"Then why did you two come back together yesterday~? From a dark forest, late at night~?"

Add frowned.

"I'm not like that with that girl. Don't get any wrong ideas."

"Alright, I know, I know, you're at that complicated age in life. But big sis will scold you if you make her cry got it?"

"That's not it. What kind of misunderstanding do you have?"

Add denied repeatedly but Rena didn't listen. She waved her hand as she left to meet Hoffman.

Add who was now the appointed leader(?) made a large sigh and glared at Ara. He got a needless misunderstanding because he came back with her last night.

But noticing Add's burning(?) gaze, Ara gave an embarrassed smile then for some reason her face became red.

".....Hmph."

Add got a sour taste in his mouth as he remembered what happened last night.

"I'll decline."

There was no point in thinking about it. Add declared arrogantly while arranging the Dynamos behind his back.

"I don't need the help of some fox, wolf or whatever. I'll obtain Eve

by myself. I don't plan on getting help from a suspicious thing like you."

"But amongst the Search Party members.... There won't be anyone that will take boy's side if boy decides to reveal his true colors. Am I right?"

Add winced at Eun's sharp deduction but shook his head.

"Kukuk, how am I supposed to trust someone that's abruptly telling me they'll help?"

"That is a sound deduction. Then do you plan on recruiting Ara? Are you planning to trick her by saying something like Eve is actually an evil Nasod or that Eve was the one controlling contaminated Nasods?"

"....."

Can this thing completely see through people's thoughts?! Add was extremely surprised because that plan was one of the options he had pondered. Add still shook his head.

"I don't have any reason to tell you the details of my plan in the first place"

Add couldn't imagine how she found out about his intention to obtain Eve. Is it because she's a body possessing spectre that she can use weird tricks?

"Anyways, be gone. I won't deal with you."

"Fine, but tell me whenever you change your mind. I don't come to surface normally but talking to this child is same as talking to me."

"Hmph....."

"Oh, I'll tell you in case you might be worried. This child's consciousness goes to sleep when I come to the surface. So you don't have to mind what happened before."

"....Get lost."

Add winced as he turned his face around. He had forgotten completely. While it wasn't on purpose, he ended up seeing Ara's naked body.

However, it does put him at ease if what Eun said was true.

"Such beautiful night.... But it is time to part."

With a murmur Ara's hair turned black. The blood red eyes also returned to normal and the 9 tails disappeared without a trace.

Add was watching this change grudgingly then Ara's body leaned forwards as if she was about to fall over. Add instinctively reached out to support her. But then Ara opened her eyes widely and scurried backwards.

Bump!

Ara backed off too fast and hit back of her head against tree. The impact was large enough to leave a bump on Ara's head. She held her head in pain for a while.

"Owowowow."

Ara, while wrapped up in pain carefully raised her head to look up. She looked startled.

"M, Mr Add?"

"....Um"

One had to inevitably get close to a person to support them. Add had tried to do it out without any particular thought but the two of them were about to come very close to each other in middle of a dark forest.

If Eun's words were to be trusted, their memories shouldn't be shared.... Just where should he start explaining?

While Add was frowning thinking about what to say, Ara asked with a worried look.

"Could it be that you met with Lord Eun?"

"She was unpleasant....."

It felt like Eun could easily see through other people's thoughts and Add didn't like it. But Ara smiled slightly and told him.

"She's mischievous but she's actually a good person."

"You're foolish to trust something like a spectre."

"Lord Eun is not a spectre! She's a Celestial Spirit!"

Ara protested but Add didn't give ear and turned around. He was tired because so many unexpected events happened at once.

"I'm heading back. Follow me."

"Huh? To where?"

"....You'll no doubt get lost if I let you head back by yourself."

Add didn't explain more and started to head back standing on his levitating Dynamos. Ara was taken aback but followed.

Add didn't care if Ara got lost or not.... But he did do something inexcusable while she was unconscious and you never know what might happen in the future so it was good to get on her favorable side.

"Hmph...."

Add recalled Eun's abrupt proposal about how she'd lend him her strength. He didn't plan to readily accept such a fishy proposal. But there could be a way he could use this to his favor if he thought it through enough.

"Kukukukuk...."

The day when he'll be able to obtain Eve could come much faster. Add laughed in high spirits while bathing in the night wind.

"Mr.Add~ Please wait. Hiii! I, I'm scared."

But the tear-filled voice coming from behind him ruined his good mood.

But when he got back he had to receive Rena's misinterpretation and Eve's cold stare as a bonus.

Never mind Rena, but why was Eve?

Add moved his gaze away from Ara to look at Eve but was surprised to see that she was not beside him anymore. Where could she have gone while he was thinking about last night? As a bonus, Elsword was gone too.

".....Where did Eve go?"

"Huh? Did Ms.Eve go somewhere?"

Ara was too busy looking at all the people moving about in the streets that she was only now beginning to figure out her party members were missing. Let's not expect anything from her.

Add's Dynamos couldn't help in this situation either. Dynamos had the feature to scan the surrounding terrain and detect life forms but they didn't have the feature to distinguish each of those life forms.

It was impossible for him to locate a specific individual in a place with so many people.

"Tch, I should add it next time."

The main issue was how to find Eve. Should he scan from the air on his Dynamos? Add pondered for a moment then asked Ara who still had her eyes wide open in confusion.

"Ask that fox. Did she see anything?"

"Lord Eun? She said they walked off holding hands."

"....Hands, feet who cares?! Where did they go?"

"She said even their footsteps were in sync..... Mr.Add you look scary."

Add took a calm breath after seeing Ara make a terrified face. Let's calm down, Elsword wouldn't run away with Eve.

Why was he so uneasy?

"She said they went towards the drinks merchant."

"...Where? Lead me."

Ara nodded then went forwards moving through the crowd. Add suppressed his beating heart and followed Ara.

Strange. Why was his heart beating so fast just because Eve disappeared from his sight? Did something abnormal happen to him?

'I should do a health checkup later....'

No abnormally was detected so far from his health examinations after 'flying to this age'. But other abnormalities could appear later on. Since Add had probably done 'something that had never been done before in history', it wouldn't be strange if something strange happened to his body as side effect.

Suppressing his uneasy heart Add followed Ara and eventually found Elsword who was making a ruckus in front of the drinks merchant.

And Eve was beside him.

"....Phew."

Breathing a sigh of relief, Add noticed the situation and let out a scornful laugh. That kid Elsword must have whined about wanting to go buy drinks so Eve must have come with him.

What a kid....

"Buying two apple juices is cheaper!!"

"You can't because I want to drink lemonade. Lemonade is also cheaper if you buy two."

"I let you have what you wanted last time! It's your turn!"

"This is my first leisure time in a while; I'm just making a logical choice."

....Two of them were squabbling over which drink to buy. At a loss for words, Add walked towards them. Elsword and Eve noticed Add

approaching and stopped arguing.

Both of them didn't say anything and gave a guarded look towards Add. Well, both of them shouldn't have very good impression of Add.

"Kukuk, fine. I'll buy this time. Drink whatever you guys want."

".....Really?"

Elsword's expression brightened. Eve quietly stared at Add then spoke.

"Keep this a secret from Rena. She worries that having too much is bad for your teeth."

"Umm, umm, are you buying for me as well?"

"Kukuk, do as you like."

Ara carefully chimed in as Add nodded. To shut kids up (although Ara was older than Add) it was best to keep some treat in their mouths. The drinks were unusually expensive but Add bore with it.

After benefitting from Add's inclusion, Elsword, Eve and Ara merrily sipped on their juices. Add also drank a cherry aid while looking for a chance to talk to Eve.

To do that it would be best if Elsword wasn't nearby.....

While Add was busy thinking of a way to talk to Eve, Ara who had drunk half of her juice suddenly grabbed her spear and spoke to Elsword.

"Mr.Elsword, I have something to talk to you about. Would you come with me?"

"It's bothersome. Can't you say it here?"

"It's bit important."

Elsword got up while scratching his head. He turned around towards Eve and told her.

"Don't go anywhere and stay here. You'll get lost again if you move around by yourself."

"I was never lost."

"Don't make me look for you later."

Elsword followed Ara and left with his great sword leaning on his shoulder. Add hadn't intended it but now he was all alone with Eve.

Okay, they were by themselves. Now to use this chance and steal her Core!No.

Eve was also exceptionally skilled and even Add couldn't insure victory against her. Not only that, Add was very reluctant about attempting such thing midday in a place with so many people.

Add kept silent to prevent any conversation from starting. He needed to buy time while he thought of what to say. He stared at the people passing by. Sure it had larger traffic than Ruben.....

'It's strange.'

Why couldn't he see a single young girl amongst so many people? Add squinted as tried to observe closely. Then he heard a cold voice.

"If you have something to say, I'd like you to speak quickly."

"Kukuk....."

Add made a low laugh when Eve broke the silence.He laughed for now. His thoughts weren't organized yet.

"If you don't have anything to say I'll go to Elsword now."

"Wait."

Add stopped her. Eve halted her steps but didn't change her expression. Well Nasods didn't change expressions in the first place.... But was it just his imagination? Her stare towards him was colder.

Ever since last night.

"Ara Haan is a bit slow but is a good person. Be good to her."

"I told you to wait."

Add suppressed his heart as he tried to buy more time. The rapid heartbeat that he got from before when he had realized Eve was gone returned.

"There's nothing between Ara and me. You're mistaken about us coming back together last night.

She was just lost and I showed her the way."

"Is that so? I understand."

Alright, the rapid heartbeat stopped. After finally getting some room to think, Add asked her the question that's been on his mind.

"What relationship do you have with Elsword?"

"We're travel companions."

Add smiled leisurely at Eve's rigid response. Analysis on how this machine lied if she needed to was already long complete.

"You two don't look like simple travel companions to me."

"Why do you want to confirm that?"

Eve's gaze turned very sharp but Add didn't care. It was interesting to see Eve give various reactions; it was admirable as a researcher.

He wanted to see various sides of her by talking to her more.

"By the way.... I didn't have the chance to speak to you about yesterday. I could have handled it fine by myself without you intervening."

Eve was talking about how Add had protected her yesterday from the Nasod miners' attack.

"Kukuk. That's a shame."

Well if you thought about it, it could have been a great chance to see the extent of Eve's skills. At the time, Nasods had appeared so suddenly and he couldn't think about it.

But Eve must have thought Add had responded sarcastically because she made an offended expression. However, this only made

Add even more joyous.

"But since it turned out like that, I'll have to thank you."

"Kukuk, you don't have to. I accidentally got in your way. I'll watch out next time."

"....."

Eve must have thought Add was making fun of her because her face turned slightly red.Was she embarrassed? Add was entranced by his but Eve quickly stiffened her face and changed the subject.

"I analyzed the Nasods from yesterday. They were contaminated."

"Contaminated? By who?"

"I'm not sure. It was method unknown to me."

It wasn't formally explained to him but he could tell with a single glance that Eve was a high class Nasod. No, judging by her battle and judgmental capabilities and her ability to express emotions....

She was amongst the highest tier of Nasods in all of history.

"I see. Then.... Just what's going on? A mere bandit managed to contaminate the Nasods and is using them as his pawns? You got to be kidding me."

"I'd like to know as well."

"We'll have to ask the person directly. Kukuk."

Add's spirit lifted after seeing Eve give a silent nod to his suggestion about capturing Banthus and interrogating him. He held out his hand towards Eve.

"I'll cooperate with you in capturing that guy and making him spit out the truth."

"....."

"I'm also very curious about what he did. Kukuk."

Eve didn't look too pleased but grabbed Add's hand. Eve

acknowledged that although she didn't know of Add's intentions, he was exceptionally skilled and couldn't be taken lightly. Not only was Add able to quickly read situations, but he was knowledgeable about Nasods as well.

Eve wanted to know why Nasods followed Banthus' orders and attacked them. It was an obvious choice for her to cooperate with Add.

But Add's mind currently was elsewhere because he was too mesmerized with his handshake with Eve.

His first skin contact with the ultimate Nasod. Her fingers beyond the glove were long and smooth.

While Add repeatedly admired and confirmed various facts, Eve tried to pull out her hand now that their handshake was done. Add instinctively continued to grab onto her hand. Eve spoke stiffly.

"The handshake is over."

"Wait, give me more time."

"I can't analyze what you mean."

"Let me just measure the temperature. 3 minutes should suffice. Ah, I would have also liked to do a biopsy."

".....I can't understand even more."

Eve cringed as Add who was still out of his mind made an entranced smile. She didn't know why Add was acting like this but it was really creepy.

"Let go."

"Wait. There's still 2 minutes and 21 seconds left."

The wrangling of Eve trying to pull out her hand and Add trying not to let go continued. Eve frowned as she manipulated her gears; Add also activated his Dynamos as a response.

Add hadn't intended on going this far but he couldn't suppress his

curiosity anymore after personally making contact with Eve.

Just when Eve had enough and was about to launch her gears toward Add, a voice came from behind two of them.

"Hmmhmm, I'm sorry. I must have arrived in a wrong time. Should I go back?"

"....."

Just when did she appear? Shocked, Add looked back. Rena stopped her fake cough and smiled brightly. Eve used this chance to quickly pull out her hand. But Eve also looked slightly surprised as she hastily retracted her gears.

"It was nothing, Rena."

"Oh, okay. So should I come back later?"

Eve closed her mouth after making a sigh. Rena smiled mischievously.

"I won't tell Elsword and Ara about this. Would that be fine?"

"Rena, I'm not like that with him."

"It's okay; I'll keep it a secret."

Rena smiled brightly and Eve made a demoralizing sigh but Add wasn't in any state to join in on their conversation. He was looking down at his hand.

As he had thought, Eve was much too desirable. To the point where he might go insane.

"Actually I saw Elsword and Ara on my way back. They were having a serious conversation so I didn't speak out to them."

"I'll go get them after."

"From what I heard from Mr.Hoffman.... Bandits are using this one cave as their base. Banthus must have run off that way. We should probably confirm he's there while defeating all of the bandits there. Let's rest for today and head there tomorrow."

"Cave? What about the forest?"

Add asked abruptly. Rena started at him strangely but Add continued to speak as if nothing was wrong.

"Wasn't there a rampaging Ent in the Shadow Forest? Angered forest spirits should be causing a ruckus right now. Shouldn't we prioritize in resolving that first?"

"What are you saying all of a sudden? Ent is the gentle guardian of the forest. Mr.Hoffman didn't mention anything about that."

Add had spoken as if it was obvious. Add blinked as Rena stared at him strangely. It felt like he just awoke from a dream.

"Kukuk.... I said something strange."

Before, his heart was beating fast and now this. Something strange must be happening to his body.

He should perform an exam soon as possible.

"Alright, let's rest well today and head out tomorrow morning."

Add and Eve nodded as Rena spoke.

At the entrance to the bandits' cave, El Search Party stood in a formation as they moved in.

"Uuu, I don't like dark places....."

"Don't lag behind. Stay in formation Ara Haan."

"Kukuk, for mere bandits they chose a nice place."

"Hey guys don't get too excited. Be cautious."

Rena stood in front of the formation. Multiple bandits dropped on the floor every time she fired an arrow.

"Strange, it looks like there's only one path in this cave."

"What do you mean? Kukuk."

"Even rabbits leave alternate holes to get away right? Why would bandits use this disadvantageous place as their base?"

"That man didn't look like he had too much intelligence."

Add agreed with Eve in his mind. No matter how you saw it Banthus was just a big weakling. He couldn't even beat their party's weakest member Elsword and ran away.

Although Add still couldn't figure out how such a weakling had control over the Nasods.

"Kuku, I'll figure that out by asking the person..... What are you doing?"

"Hii! B, Bugs!"

With her face pale, Ara clung to Add's back and pointed at the cave's wall. Just like she said the wall was swarming with spiders and other multiple legged bugs.

"That's normal for a cave.... Now get off of me."

Ara's soft part was touching his back and it was troubling.

Add didn't let his troubles show and tried to shake Ara off. But that made her dive her face into Add's hood even more.

"Honestly....."

Annoyed, Add was about to bring out his Dynamos to take care of the bugs. But then Eve used an Electronball to cleanly burn all the bugs away. Rather than the skill itself, Add was more impressed by how she had precisely controlled the output to only get rid of the bugs while leaving the cave wall intact.

"There's no more. Ara Haan."

"R, Really?"

"So stay in formation. This is the bandits' base."

Ara finally nodded and moved away from Add. Eve stared at Add and asked.

"Scout for hidden enemies with that."

"Kukuk, not 'that' it's called Dynamo."

Add let fly his Dynamos frontwards just as Eve requested.

Rena was already defeating all the bandits by herself and there were only small fry bandits here. But Add did so anyways because Eve had requested him.

"But...."

Add looked at Elsword who hadn't said anything since they've entered the cave. He was strangely quiet and it was bothering him.

"Well it's better than him being loud...."

Just what did he talk about with Ara?

If you thought about it, since Eun knew Add was after Eve, Ara could also hear about Add's plan from Eun.

Ara could potentially know about Add's plan.

Add stared at Ara coldly but she was in the middle of flailing her arms widely and falling over after tripping on a rock.

"Phew, I almost fell again."

That clumsy Ara wouldn't be acting so carefree like this if she knew that Add was after Eve.

For some reason Eun was keeping Add's plan a secret for now.

"Rena."

Elsword held up his head and called Rena who was in front of the formation. Rena looked back after defeating the twentieth bandit.

"I want to ask something of you. I want to try fighting Banthus by myself."

"Oh? Sure, go ahead."

Rena answered instantly without much thought. This startled Elsword who had made the request "Can I really?"

"You asked because you want to right? Then try your best. I'll be watching over you."

"But... It was because of me that Banthus got away....."

Elsword spoke with a dark expression on his face. Rena lowered her bow and shook her head.

"If you didn't do well last time, you just have to do well this time. If you don't do well this time, you just have to do well the next time."

".....Okay, I got it! I'll catch him for sure this time!"

He hadn't mentioned explicitly but Elsword must have been thinking that Banthus got away because he wasn't good enough.

Now he was getting riled up to make up for that mistake.

'Too soft....'

Elsword was rather skilled for his age. His strength to wield a huge sword bigger than his height and his magic capabilities were way above average kids his age.

Still he was the weakest amongst the Search Party members. Add could defeat him within 5 seconds if he wanted to.

Elsword who was getting riled up so he could make up for his mistake, and Rena who allowed him to do so, "I'll cheer you on Mr.Elsword!"

And Ara who smiled brightly,

"....."

And Eve who didn't say anything but looked strangely satisfied. They were all too soft.

Add put on his hood and sighed deeply. He couldn't agree with this atmosphere where everyone was warmly cheering for Elsword '..... What the heck?'

He didn't care an inch about Elsword.

Capture Banthus, find out how he was able to control the Nasods, then use that information as a bait to capture Eve.

It was a perfect 3 step plan.

"Kukukuk....."

Add's low laugh rang across the cave.

Because of Rena's efforts, El Search Party was able to get past all the bandits plus the swarm of bats without a scratch and reached the bandits' main hideout.

"No way! You guys are still alive?! And how did you find me here?"

Banthus was haughtily sitting in his chair that was surrounded by treasures. Surprised, he stood up hastily. His bandits were also glaring at the party with weapons in their hands.

"So Mr.Banthus you were here after all. Quietly put down your weapon!"

"There's nowhere to run. Surrender or get hurt."

"Face me Banthus!"

"...But what about the Phoru?"

Every party member that's been each saying a line towards Banthus all turned their gaze towards Add when he murmured this. Their gaze seemed to say 'what the heck are you saying'. Add explained as if it was obvious.

"Red Giant Phoru was supposed to show up....."

"What, you liked Phorus?"

"I didn't know you had such unusual hobby."

"Phorus are cute! I like them too."

"Ah-hah, So Add actually liked Phorus huh? That's so cute~"

Add's face heated up at everyone's lukewarm reaction. Why was he being treated like someone who blurted out nonsense?

"Don't kid with me! On the way here....."

"We didn't encounter any Phorus on our way here."

Add covered his eye patch with his hand after listening to Eve's

cold words. Why did he suddenly say that?

He didn't understand it himself. Could it be that side effect of the 'jump' is affecting his body and mind strangely?

"...Forget about what I just said."

"Phorus are soft and it feels really nice when you hug them! I know what you mean!"

"Then he could go hug them now."

"I didn't think you were that kind of person.... Strange."

"Guys, don't be like that. I like Phorus too. B, But I didn't expect that A, Add was hiding that kind of hobby. Pffft."

".....I said forget it!!"

With his face red, Add shouted loudly and this got everyone to stop talking.

But Ara was still staring at him with a gaze that said 'I understand how you feel', Elsword was staring at him as if he just saw a rare creature and Rena was trying to suppress her laughter..... It felt insulting.

....He was glad that at least Eve didn't show any change in her expression. Then Eve spoke.

"If you'd like, we can look for Phorus on the way back."

"Ah, that sounds good. I want to play with Phorus too!"

"I told you to stop...."

Add felt like he was getting bullied and was about to snap. Then a shout came from the other side of the cavern.

"How dare you! Are you guys making fun of me!? You better not be thinking you'd be able to get away safely after intruding into my base!"

Banthus was angry because El Search Party members were talking amongst themselves merrily in front of him as if they came out on a

picnic.

Situation might be different if Banthus was by himself. But right now he had 30 of his elite bandits with him.

"Sorry, I'd like to have you surrender quietly right now. But I made a promise."

"What a lowly creature. Not being able to judge the difference in our battle strength."

"Anyone is fine, come at me!"

"Hm, shall we start!?"

".....I'm in an extremely bad mood right now. You better shut up!"

El Search Party showed no fear towards the enraged bandits in front of them.

"How dare you! Everyone! Attack! Show them how scary the Banthus bandits are!"

"Yaaaaaaaah!!"

30 bandits all shouted at once and charged at the El Search Party.

"Uwaaah!"

"Waaah!"

"Kwaagh!"

Then 30 screams rang out across the cavern as all the bandits fell on the floor. When Eve swung her whip, Add fired shockwave from his Dynamos, Rena fired her arrows and finally Ara lightly swung her spear, the cavern was clear of bandits.

It was 5 versus 30 but it didn't even take 5 seconds for the situation to conclude.

".....Ugh?"

Banthus panicked and looked around. But this was a cavern with one path. There was nowhere to run.

Capturing Banthus now would be easier than flipping over a page of a book..... But Rena looked back at Elsword.

"Ok, Elsword. I promised right? Go ahead and fight."

"Alright!"

Elsword shouted as he grabbed his sword and headed alone towards Banthus.

With all his men defeated, Banthus was too immersed with figuring out a way to escape. He saw Elsword coming at him alone and frowned.

"You are going to fight me by yourself again? You're taking me too lightly!"

"It doesn't matter who I face. I don't have time to waste staying weak."

Elsword calmly lowered his stance.

"Bring it on old guy. It will be different this time."

"Hmph, looks like you haven't been taught a lesson on how harsh the world is."

Banthus hesitated although he talked big. Even if he somehow beat Elsword, the remaining four were fearfully skilled.

He absolutely couldn't find a way out of this.

"We'll let you go if you beat Elsword,"

Eve abruptly suggested towards the hesitating Banthus. He couldn't believe what he just heard and asked for confirmation.

"You better not be lying."

"Nasods don't lie."

"Kahahaha!! Alright. You better keep your promise when I beat this brat!"

Banthus spoke confidently as he held up his sword. But he

hesitated again when he saw Elsword.

Elsword in his low stance was glaring at Banthus with an unwavering gaze.

As if he wasn't interested in anything other than this fight, it was an enormous concentration.

"Ugh...."

Add who was watching from afar asked Eve while Banthus was groaning in hesitation.

"Why did you give that useless condition? What if he loses?"

"Well, it would be troublesome if Banthus couldn't focus on the fight. Elsword is trying to fight seriously and it would be bad if his opponent's mind was all over the place right?"

Rena explained to Add instead. Eve nodded in acknowledgement. Eve's gaze was solely focused on Elsword.

Add could get over Eve's reaction since they've known each other.....but. Add suppressed his displeasure and asked Rena.

".....I don't understand. Why do you all favor Elsword so much?"

"Hmm? He's hard working? It's admirable to see him work towards becoming stronger."

"Mr.Elsword wants to become stronger! And he'll be able to soon!"

Even Ara joined in and Add made a tired sigh.

It's true that Elsword's achievements were impressive compared to his age. But Add couldn't see why he was evaluated so highly.

"I still don't get it...."

"Elsword will become stronger than anyone."

Eve spoke while still staring at Elsword. Eve added as a certainty as Add frowned in displeasure.

"Certainly."

"Hmph...."

Banthus and Elsword were standing off as the party were talking. No one risked making the first move.

'...This brat. Is he really the same kid from before?'

Sweat ran down Banthus's head as he glared at Elsword. Elsword was still in his low stance staring at him as if he'd jump at him at any moment. Boy's concentration did not waver.

Banthus didn't want to make any reckless moves but he was at a disadvantage if the time went on.

Humans needed a lot of patience to maintain tension, especially during battle.

"Uwooooo!!"

Banthus couldn't take the pressure anymore and charged as he swung his sword. His sword dropped down with a force that'd crush a boulder. But Elsword's expression didn't change as he dodged calmly by moving backwards.

Judging by the risky distance Elsword dodged it by, it seemed he'd read the movement of Banthus'

sword. But Banthus had plans of his own as well.

"Kahahaha!"

Banthus wasn't taken aback and thrust with his sword again. It was a combo attack taking into account that Elsword would dodge the first attack.

He was defeated last time because his downward strike had missed unexpectedly but the same thing won't happen this time. Banthus haughtily thrust his sword but didn't let his guard down. You could never be too careful so here's a third attack!!

When Banthus felt that his second attack had connected, he didn't bother to check as he launched another attack. With this 3 hit combo that brat won't stand a chance.....

"Are you done attacking?"

Chill went down Banthus' spine when he heard this. Elsword had narrowly dodged his second attack, lowered his stance even more and had approached closer to Banthus.

"How....!?"

"Mega Slash!!"

Elsword didn't answer him as he swung his sword widely. Banthus wasn't able to dodge the attack and was hit directly. He fell on the ground even before he got a chance to scream.

Banthus went down with just a single strike.

"You were so slow that I could see all your moves."

Elsword finally answered Banthus's question after defeating him. But Banthus wasn't conscious to hear it.

Eve approached Elsword as he was loosening his stance and shaking the dust off his sword.

"For you that was rather impressive."

"This is nothing. Ah, I'm hungry."

Elsword rubbed his stomach. Ara came to congratulate him as well.

"That was amazing Mr.Elsword! You're showing the results of training with me!"

".....I learned well from you Ara but I don't want to ever again."

"Eh? Why?!"

"You're scary when your hair turns white...."

Rena watched the three of them talk then looked back towards Add.

"How was that? It turned out fine right?"

".....I could have done that much with my eyes closed."

Add answered bluntly and examined the area. He had suspected there could be hidden Nasods like the last time but he couldn't find anything else.

"El they stole from Ruben isn't here as well..."

"Did he hide it somewhere beforehand?"

"Not likely judging by how surprised he was when we entered."

Add and Rena conversed but two of them were thinking of different matters.

'Did he obtain Nasods from before just by chance?'

It wasn't a compelling hypothesis.... But Add will be able to question Banthus when he wakes up. If Banthus tried to hide information, he'll just show him what true fear is.

"Why don't you say something to congratulate Elsword too?"

"Hmph, why do I have to say something like that? That was just kid's play."

"Elsword will become stronger quickly. Kids with purpose are strong."

Rena spoke calmly. Add wanted to protest but stopped. It was because she was correct.

Also Add didn't want to admit it.... Elsword was currently at a much higher level than he was back in Ruben. Although Add wasn't sure how Elsword achieved such a progress in such a short time, it seemed he had trained with Ara and whatever they did proved very effective.

"So 1 turned into 5. There's not much difference....."

"He'll soon become 100, and 10000 soon enough. If you don't hurry he might catch up to you Add."

"....Don't make me laugh."

Rena smiled brightly when Add's lowered his voice.

"Ah, sorry. That was rude of me just now. I know that Add also works hard towards his goal."

"Hmph.... You don't need to apologize."

If you said people became stronger because they had a goal to work towards, that didn't only apply to Elsword. It's not like Add acquired his current strength without any goals or purpose.

That's right everything was for....

Add's gaze turned towards Eve. She was hitting Elsword. He must have said something she didn't like during their conversation. Elsword was also raising his voice as he was getting beat. Ara was flabbergasted trying to stop the two of them.

No matter how much Add looked at her, Eve didn't look back.

"Hmph....."

Add put on his hood and turned back.

"You'll become mine in the end anyways."

It didn't matter now.

If she didn't look.

He'll just have to make her look.

Elder.

After they finished arresting the bandits, the group returned to Elder and handed the bandits over to Hoffman. Since Hoffman was the spiritual leader of Elder he should be able to deal with them accordingly.

Finished with their work, El Search Party headed to an inn to relieve their fatigue. Everyone else was resting except Add and Rena who sat together talking in the first floor's lounge.

"Let me talk to that idiot bandit boss alone."

"Ah, so you're worried about the Nasod case after all?"

Add nodded silently to Rena's deduction. He couldn't question Banthus on their way back because he was unconscious the whole time.

And....Add couldn't do it in front of everyone since he was planning apply torture during his interrogation. He didn't even need to ask for rest of the party's opinion to know that they'd be against Add's method.

'They're too soft....'

Rena smiled.

"Come to think of it, this is the first time I've seen Add so motivated about something. Alright, just leave it to big sis."

"Kukuk, how can you be so sure when it hasn't even been that long since we've met?"

"Ah, but Add. Haven't you been reluctant towards us?"

Add was taken aback because Rena had said it so naturally. He couldn't answer yes or no.

"Ah I'm sorry. That was bit too harsh. Hm, so what I meant was...."

Add, you are uncomfortable with us right? Still, you like Eve but you also like Ara. Oh my, you only like the girls don't you?"

Rena smiled mischievously and Add frowned. Were Elves always this mischievous?

"What do you want me to say?"

"Why won't you like me too? That makes me sad. Maybe you feel girls older than you lack the charm?"

"Technically Ara should also be older."

Add loosened up to speak his mind and this caused Rena to grin. Add knew she was completely fooling around.... But it didn't feel all that bad.

"No, I didn't mean that I was feeling any attraction towards Ara."

"Well maybe not as a girl but as a human right? Ah, sorry I meant you think favorably of her as a person right?"

She probably went out of her way to change her words because she was an elf. Besides from Rena, Eve was a Nasod, Raven who wasn't here right now had a mechanical left arm, Ara was possessed by something strange and finally Add also had situation of his own that was comparable to the rest of them.

So in principle, the only 'Pure human from this age' amongst the El Search Party was Elsword.

"Just what are you trying to say? Kukuk, stop speaking in circles."

"Hm, I just would like you to get along with everyone. Especially, if you want to be with Eve more I think it's better for you to just express yourself more honestly."

".....Mind your own business. Don't meddle in other people's affairs."

Rena made a helpless smile at Add's stern reaction.

"I know I'm meddling too much here but you have to promise me

this one thing. No matter what happens, don't do anything that would make them cry."

"...."

Could it be that she... Knew of Add's plans? Add winced inside and stared at Rena but she just continued to smile beautifully.

While Add didn't care too much about it, Rena was honestly very beautiful. Her gorgeous

appearance would catch anyone's attention. Her body expressed those very feminine curves and the most charming part about her was how she created an atmosphere that put people around her at ease.

Any guy would fall for her...

"If you can keep this one promise I'll always be on Add's side. Easy right?"

"Kukuk."

Add thought for a while then nodded as he grinned. He didn't know how much Rena knew. But when Add decides to execute his plan, it would only be after he had made all the necessary preparations.

An empty promise like this, it didn't matter at all.

"Alright, I'll try to do that much as possible."

"Okay, I like kids that work hard."

Rena patted then pet Add's head.

She acted so naturally that Add momentarily lost his timing to get angry as he stared blankly for a while. Then he finally frowned and pushed her hand away.

"Don't treat me like a kid."

"It's because I'm proud of you. Proud."

Rena continued to smile brightly and Add lowered his head to avoid her gaze. There was a saying

'you won't be able to spit on a smiling face'.... Rena was a very good example of this.

You could say that she had the potential to make others never be able to get angry. If Eun from before was an unreadable type because she was too suspicious, in contrast Rena had a strange charm where she made others get along with her and let their guard down.

What startled Add the most was that he wasn't reluctant about this. Add even felt that if it weren't for his 'goal' it wouldn't be bad to obediently go along with what Rena said.

"Stop wasting time and let me speak to that bandit. But I'll meet with him alone."

"Hmm. I'm curious too, can't we meet him together? There's no word from Raven so far."

"This is my speciality. You'd just get in my way."

And I won't be able to torture.

When Add spoke strongly, Rena resigned in disappointment and stood up. Rena should easily be able to negotiate a meeting for him and Banthus alone.

Then get the information about Nasods and use that as a bait to get Eve.....

Add was making a satisfied smile when the door of the inn opened. A person entered the inn.

Middle aged man with a good appearance looked around. His expression brightened when he found Rena.

"Huh? Mr.Hoffman?"

Rena's eyes widened as she was just about to go out to meet him. Hoffman approached Rena with a very nervous expression and spoke.

"I have something to talk to you about."

"I don't know what that is but I think I should listen to it as well."

Add spoke coldly while putting his legs on top of the table. Add raised his arms behind the chair and stared at Hoffman with a haughty expression.

It was to get the higher stance on the conversation.

"You wouldn't say no right?"

"Who's this boy....?"

Hoffman didn't show any change in expression at Add's arrogant attitude and asked Rena. Rena answered without any hesitation.

"He's one of my comrades. I don't know what you're here for.... But if you are about to make a request to the El Search Party I think it would be best if we all listened together."

"Hmm, I think so too."

Hoffman thought for a moment then he nodded in agreement.

In the bedroom that the guys of El Search Party were using which was originally meant for 3 people, Hoffman and the entire El Search Party sat facing each other. Hoffman was being extra cautious of his surroundings closing the windows and checking the locks.

"That's enough, there's no one listening except for us."

Add couldn't bare Hoffman's overly cautious attitude and used the Dynamo's scouting mode. In this mode, Add will be alerted to any other presences nearby.

"Alright...."

Hoffman sat and examined each of the El Search Party members. Everyone besides Rena looked like they were in the age of tens..... Honestly, to Hoffman's eyes they were bunch of kids.

But they defeated the Banthus bandits and did look quite skilled. A drowning man will pluck at even a straw. Hoffman decided he had no other choice.

"Actually there's a problem in this town."

"You mean the taxes?"

Rena must have heard something from Hoffman when they met before.

"That's right. Wally, the lord of Elder castle is issuing unreasonably high taxes. Market prices in the town are a mess; everyone's having a miserable time."

"So that's why juices were so expensive."

Add murmured and Eve also nodded. Ara who had drunk the juice together with them was late in showing her surprise and Elsword.....seemed bored as he was on the verge of falling asleep.

Hoffman diverted his attention away from Elsword and continued to explain.

"Not only that.....he's forcefully taking all the young girls in this town to his castle."

"Ah, something did feel off...."

"What are they doing by taking all the girls?"

"Oh, I know! That's.... hmm."

The girls all reacted differently and amongst them Ara stalled her words. She thought hard for a while then finally shouted with a shine in her eyes.

"Lavish obscene parties! I heard all guys like that! I heard they all want to have it!"

"What do you mean by that?"

"Ehem! Ara, not all guys are like that. Not Raven, nor Mr.Hoffman here."

Rena corrected Ara then looked at Add.

"And of course not Add right?"

".....Kukuk, stop with the useless talks. So they are taking all the young girls? The discontent amongst the citizens must be quite substantial."

Add had remembered how he had not seen any young girls in Elder's streets earlier today.

With so many people, Elder must have its own complicated issues as well.

"So the lord is being ruling by tyranny. Why come to us? Do you want us to go nag the lord to not to be so bad?"

"The town's become too impoverished and we who've lost our wives and daughters decided we can't live like this anymore. We plan to overthrow the castle's lord Wally."

Hoffman declared solemnly then he bowed deeply towards the El Search Party.

"Please, lend us your strength."

"Kuku, obviously we'll...."

Add laughed as he was about to decline when.

"Understood."

"Lavish obscene parties are enemy of women! I'll defeat them for sure!"

"We'll help much as we can."

The girls all agreed at once. Elsword was still sleeping.

"Thank you! With your help, the citizens will also be able to bring out more courage!"

"Wait, I didn't agree ye....."

Add who was about to propose a counter opinion was met with cold stares from the girls.

"Are you saying you'll abandon the girls that were captured?"

"That's so harsh Mr.Add! We should obviously help!"

"Hm, Add. Even big sis thinks that's a bit harsh."

Add was startled when he was showered with differing intensities of criticisms. If the more rational Raven was here he would be able to help Add by giving a neutral opinion..... But he was not here.

Elsword was still sleeping; he probably won't be of any help even if he was awake.

No, since when did Add start relying on someone else's help? You couldn't be relying on others to get through obstacles.

Humans always have to solve their problems alone by themselves.

"Kukuk, I know you're all worked up but listen to what I say."

Add was the only one here that could rein in the party right now.

"Even if Wally is a tyrannical ruler he's still the castle's lord that's been approved by the kingdom.

Do you think it is right for us to punish him just because we want to? Shouldn't there be a proper procedure for these kinds of things?"

"Uuu, th, that's...."

Ara made a troubled expression and couldn't argue back. Add continued and turned to Rena this time.

"Since this is a big matter, it's important to ask for opinions of people that are not here right now."

"It you're talking about Raven he will no doubt approve."

"But we still need a confirmation. Overthrowing the castle's lord isn't something trivial."

Rena frowned when Add argued logically but she didn't speak back. After two consecutive victories, Add turned to Eve who was the only remaining opposition.

"This is a matter of humans. Is there a reason for a Nasod like you to get involved?"

"There's none."

Add nodded proudly to himself when Eve answered while closing her eyes. They were dangerously close to getting involved in some weird business but Add had managed to stop them. He felt proud of himself.

'.....but couldn't I steal Eve's Core during the ensuing chaos?'

A thought went through Add's mind for a moment but that was a dangerous venture. There was no way to turn back if things got out of hand and Eve was to break.

No, there was a way to turn back.... But it was way too risky.

"But even if this is a matter for humans I don't plan on leaving this be."

"What?"

"I know how painful it is to lose members of your own kind."

When Eve spoke decisively, Ara also stood up resolutely.

"Abiding by the laws is important too but this isn't right! We have to rescue the people that were captured soon as possible!"

"Hm, I'll explain it to Raven later."

Rena also erased her doubts and turned back to the agreeing side. Everything went back to point zero after a single word from Eve. Add was so taken aback that he couldn't even argue back.

This is other's problem. Not only that, but it was clearly dangerous.... Why would you even volunteer for it? Even if they manage to not get hurt during the battle, they could become wanted criminals if things were to go wrong.

"This is...."

When it looked like he couldn't stop them anymore, Add half gave up and asked for confirmation from Hoffman.

"Fine, but before that, let me see that bandit boss. I need to figure

something out from him before we do this."

"....If you mean Banthus, people came from the castle and took him into custody."

"What?"

Add couldn't believe what he just heard. His calculation was off. Of course, taking Banthus would be the proper procedure. But he didn't think they'd take him away even before the day had passed.

Wasn't this a suspiciously quick response from the castle? As if they had already known the El Search Party would capture Banthus bandits....

'....I'm probably thinking too much.'

There was no way such a thing was possible in 'This age'. Add grinded his teeth while clenching his fist. Then there was no choice left but to go to the castle directly and meet with Banthus.

But from what he had heard so far, Wally the lord of the castle seemed like a greedy and impudent person.... There was no way he'd let Add meet with Banthus.

In the end, Add will have to resort to force.

"Dammit, Fine. If that's how it's going to be, I'll turn the castle upside down along with that lord."

Add spoke in a sinister way but Ara made a bright smile in response.

"Mr.Add, so you also opened your eyes to heart of justice!"

"For you to be willing I'm a bit surprised."

"If you rescue the girls you'll be able to get many thanks from them. Maybe there will be some pretty girls amongst them?"

Annoyed, Add ignored the reaction from the girls and asked Hoffman menacingly.

"So what's the plan? You're not going to tell me we're going to

blindly face them straight on right?

Even if citizens of this town were to blindly rise up with swords and spears, there's no way they'll be a match for the castle's soldiers. Or could it be that you're going to ask us to defeat them all for you?"

"O, of course not. There's a path that you can use to infiltrate into the castle. I'd like your group to go through there..... and rescue the captured girls."

Add wasn't very convinced of Hoffman's words but nodded.

It seemed there was no way he could stop the others now, then he might as well go meet with Banthus during this job and torture him to make him spit out the truth.

"Fine, then...."

"Yawwwn."

With a long yawn, Elsword opened his eyes while stretching his arms. After yawning with his mouth open widely, Elsword rubbed his eyes while looking around.

"What? Is it time for breakfast already?"

"It's still night. And stop opening your mouth rudely like that. It's unsightly."

Elsword ignored Eve's nagging and stood up as he grabbed his sword.

"Then let's go."

"To where Mr.Elsword?"

Elsword spoke without an inch of hesitation.

"I heard there's someone up to no good. Let's go blow him up into bits."

"Yes! Let's!"

"Eve is battle ready."

"Everyone pack your things."

When everyone stood up, Add muttered.

"It's late today, let's sleep for tonight and leave tomorrow after coming up with a strategy."

Add didn't approve of this at all but it was already too late to stop this flow of events.

Underground Waterway.

After accepting Hoffman's request, the El Search Party moved into the Underground Waterway so they could infiltrate into the Wally's castle.

"Ugh, it's so damp..... and it smells really bad."

"It can't be helped."

"Oh, look there's a boot floating around."

The other members were chatting casually but Add who was walking in front of them didn't say anything. Well, it was also partly because Add moved by standing on his floating dynamos so he couldn't get wet.

'.....No matter how many times I think about it it's strange.'

At that moment Rena who was moving in front of the group looked like she was slowing down....then she was now walking besides Add. She whispered to Add so the others couldn't hear.

"Are you worried about something?"

"It's nothing."

".....Hm, perhaps you didn't want to do this after all?"

Add shook his head when Rena asked worriedly. At first Add had thought this was a bothersome task so he tried to stay out of it. But now his thoughts had changed.

"It's because the events are turning out too strangely."

"What's on your mind?"

"Banthus. At first I thought he was just someone insignificant but the problem is getting larger."

"How is it precisely?"

"When we caught him, the castle's lord took him away as if he was waiting for us to. He was taken away in no time that would have taken for standard procedures. It was as if Wally had known we'd catch and bring him here."

"You think.....the castle's lord is suspicious?"

Rena asked after thinking deeply to herself but Add didn't answer her. Instead he increased the output of his Dynamo to move forwards faster.

Rena pointed out a logical fact. But what Add was thinking about was more illogical.

'There's no way.'

It wasn't possible. He was just over thinking it. Add started calculating again thinking about everything that had happened so far.

Someone knew what would happen already and prepared beforehand.....

Psh!!

At that moment a sharp wind flew by Add's ears making a shivering sound. Shocked, Add looked back to see that Rena was aiming her bow.

Could it be that she just tried to hit him...?

"Did...."

While Add was busy being surprised at Rena's sudden attack, Rena calmly fired another arrow. The arrow flying towards him finally woke Add up. As he was about to switch into battle mode...

"Uwaah!"

He heard a scream from far away. Rena's arrows hadn't missed Add. It was actually aiming for a target that was hiding far away.

"Be glad Add. You might be able to find out the truth right now."

Rena calmly fired an arrow and another scream was heard. Finally everyone else noticed the current situation and prepared for battle.

"Everyone, be careful."

Rena erased the smile on her face and attacked without hesitation.

"They're faces we've seen before, they're Banthus' bandits."

"What?"

Surprised, Add examined the person that was lying unconscious after getting hit by Rena's arrow.

He wore the same clothes as the people Add had seen in Banthus' cave.

They had surely captured Banthus and all his minions, why were they now hiding inside the underground waterway that led into the castle?

"As for why.... We should be able to find out by asking them directly right?"

Rena smiled again as she fired an arrow.

"Uwah!"

"Aggh!!"

Banthus' minions attacked rather boldly but they were no match for the El Search Party.

"Ugh, the smell is getting worse..."

"A rat.... Unpleasant..."

Rather than the mobs of bandits, the condition of the waterway was getting in their way more. Add who didn't have any dirt on him

thanks to him being able to float spoke in a stern voice.

"There's a group of bandits in front of us. Looks like Banthus is there too."

"Well then, shall we go ask him?"

"Before that...."

Add was about to speak but stopped. Banthus who he had originally thought of as an insignificant trash was turning out to be a rather persistent fellow... It was likely that he won't reveal what he knew easily.

Add was originally going to torture Banthus alone but things didn't go as planned and now he had to meet him along with the rest of the party.

"Are you worried about something Mr.Add?"

"I'll blow Banthus away in one hit!"

"...Nevermind."

Add trying to explain will just make things more complicated. Add shut his mouth and moved forwards.

Dynamos Add had sent out for scouting had reported there were 20 bandits and Banthus waiting for them. Banthus seemed to not know what was going on. He was lying on his side before he stood up in surprise.

"No way! How did you guys get here?"

".....Then why are you guarding this place?"

It would be correct to assume that their infiltration plan had been leaked.... But Banthus didn't give ear and laughed out loud.

"Kahaha!! They said someone will come this way so I was guarding here but to think that someone will be you guys. This is great! I'll get my revenge on you guys with this new Nasod arm that I got!"

Banthus held up his right arm to show the party. Surprisingly,

unlike before, his arm had turned into a machine.

"To call such a thing Nasod, I'm insulted."

"Ah, isn't that the same as Mr. Raven's?! What should we do?"

"What do you mean? We just beat him up."

"It's not something I'd want in my collection.... But let me rip your entire arm off."

The party talked leisurely to themselves despite Banthus' gloating. But Rena, who would have normally joined in on the conversation stayed quiet the entire time. Then she suddenly spoke in an extremely low voice.

"...Then shall I start cleaning things up?"

Rena fired rapidly without even looking at her targets. Banthus' minions fell left and right each time she shot. Banthus was surprised by this sudden attack and tried to order his minions to attack.....

"Charge!!"

But by the time he had finished speaking none of his minions were standing. Rena had cleaned up all the minions with a frightening speed.

It was a display of skill that even sent chill down the spine of Add who was on the same side. Add also had the skills to clean up all the bandits here without getting his hands wet. But he couldn't do it this quick and efficiently.

Drip!

It didn't end with defeating all the minions. Blood was dripping down both of Banthus' cheeks.

"Kuk"

After realizing the pain late, Banthus covered his cheeks with his hands and groaned in pain. Anyone could tell that Rena hadn't missed; she let the arrow graze on purpose.

Rena murmured in a low voice when both enemy and allies were frozen by this atmosphere.

"That's nothing to gloat about.... Having such a thing attached to your body. There are also people who suffer because of that."

Rena narrowed her eyes and aimed her bow at Banthus again. This gesture said that she was going to let it hit this time, Banthus' face turned pale.

Banthus had gained the Nasod Arm and had recovered some of his self confidence. But Rena's unworldly skills with the bow.... He didn't ever want to face it.

"That's enough."

At that moment, Add sent one of his Dynamos to block Rena's sight. Add laughed in a low voice when Rena quietly turned her eyes to look.

"I don't know why you're so angry but what are we going to do if you're like this?"

"Hm. You're right. Sorry."

Rena accepted obediently and lowered her bow. Since Raven wasn't here, Rena was currently the El Search Party's backbone and the leader.... She needed to maintain as much composure as possible.

A sigh of relief went through rest of the party when Rena withdrew her bow due to Add's

intervention. The party members also had enough battle experiences to know that.....they were glad Rena was on their side.

They also promised themselves to never make Rena angry.

The awkward silence where Banthus was looking for a chance to run, Rena was keeping silent and nobody else was talking continued. Add frowned.

This situation annoyed him somehow.

"Hey, Elsword. You go fight alone just like last time."

"What? Me?"

"Why? You afraid you'll lose? Did you win last time by pure luck?"

When Add laughed wickedly, Elsword instantly got riled up and headed towards Banthus by himself.

Banthus who was totally terrified by Rena's marksmanship earlier frowned as he saw Elsword approach him.

He knew that the El Search Party was taking him lightly but it annoyed him.

"How dare you...."

"If you win we'll let you go. We'll also give you funds to restart if you want."

Banthus was about to say something but stopped after hearing the now more improved offer(?).

Add held up his hand to show Banthus.

"Instead, if you lose..... Tell me everything you know. What you did with the El you stole, and lots of other things. I have many things I'd like to hear from you."

"Kahaha. If it's the El whereabouts I can tell you right now! I sold it to the castle's lord Wally! I was actually hired by him!"

Add who had suggested the offer was dumbfounded when Banthus revealed the information so easily. Well Add could have guessed that already by how Banthus who's been taken by the castle authorities was now guarding the Underground Waterway..... But wasn't there no advantage for Banthus if he revealed this before they even fought?

But Banthus had already forgotten how scared he was by Rena. He was now feeling extremely confident.

"You'll become the first sacrifice for arm! Come at me brat!"

"Hey old guy, my name is Elsword!"

Elsword looked unsatisfied and swung his blade as he charged in first unlike last time.

Having a larger stature was usually an advantage in melee battles (even in a sword fight) so there was no reason for Banthus to back off from this challenge.

"Kahahah"

Believing in the power of his new Nasod arm, Banthus swung his sword in confidence.

Elsword started his sword fight with Banthus. Rest of the Search Party distanced themselves to watch just like last time. Ara had her eyes open widely focusing as if she didn't want to miss a single movement, Eve was more composed but she was the same as Ara.

"Tch....."

Add clicked his tongue because he had done something that was not like him. He just didn't like the awkward silence from before so he sent Elsword out to fight. But it was working better than he had thought.

Elsword was unpleasant and unlikable to Add but he was a popular individual amongst this party.

Maybe popular wasn't the correct term. Shall he say Elsword was the person of most interest in the group? Add didn't want to admit this fact but Elsword had the power to draw people's gaze towards him.

Even though he was the weakest, and to Add's eyes was a mere simple and foolish child.... He was favored by the rest of the group.

Unlike somebody else.

"Tch."

Rena carefully came close to and stood beside Add who was trying to ignore Elsword and Banthus clashing swords.

Then she started to speak hesitantly.

"Um, I'm sorry. I was...."

"Don't apologize. You'll be admitting that you made a mistake."

Add stopped Rena from apologizing while being careful so that the others couldn't hear. When Rena looked back with a startled expression Add tried to speak whatever that came to his mind.

"There are only troublesome kids in this group right now so it's dangerous for you to get so worked up. Just keep that in mind."

Rena seemed to make a small sigh then nodded. Her face was red. She must have been embarrassed that she showed herself getting so angry.

....Add was quite startled because he had never thought Rena would ever show a side like this. Rena was usually kind to everyone, was easy to speak to and tried to care for Add who tried to keep himself in the outskirts of the group. She knew how to handle Add very well.

She was a beautiful and overwhelmingly strong elf lady who was kind to everyone.

Honestly, Add was significantly fond of her and held her in high regards. That was why Add was unsure of how to deal with her now that she was showing such a weak side like this.

But keeping silent was awkward too.

"Its fine long as you don't do it again. Forget it."

"....."

Because of Rena's gaze, Add was forced to squeeze out the words from his mouth. They were words he had almost never said before so he stuttered to get it out. But the die had been cast.

"B, Because..... E, everyone makes... mistakes...."

"Pfft."

".....I didn't say it to make you laugh."

Add pouted because Rena had burst out laughing. It was awkward even for Add who had said it so he didn't have any strength in his reply.

"Yes, sorry. Add encouraged me for the first time and yet I ended up laughing."

"Hmph....."

Add folded his arms and continue to ignore. Rena stopped her laughter and asked in an uncertain voice.

"Can you... keep this a secret from Raven?"

"...."

"I don't want worry him."

Add purposely made a loud sigh and continued to stare forwards. Not giving eye to Rena beside him.

"I don't know what you're talking about. Everyone else will probably be the same."

Ara is slow but good natured so she wouldn't go out of her way to mention past events. Raven and Eve were uncomfortable with each other so that's cleared.

Elsword was an idiot so he wouldn't even remember that Rena ever got angry.

"Yes, Thank you."

"I didn't do anything that deserves thanks. Kukuk."

Add was ignoring Rena and was watching the fight between Elsword and Banthus. But his mind wasn't focused on the fight. He was thinking of something else.

'.....was it because of that left arm Nasod?'

Just like Elsword and Eve, Rena and Raven were also traveling together before they joined the Search Party. He didn't know what relationship the two had in detail. But it was rare for Rena to get

angry.... It was probably because she couldn't stand Banthus gloating about his Nasod arm.

Because she was reminded of somebody else.

"...Kukuk."

That's so like Rena. While Add was letting out an ambiguous laugh, the battle between Elsword and Banthus was reaching its end.

Clang!!

Banthus and Elsword's blades came together with the sound of metals clashing. This time they both went at it with all the force they had trying end the fight right now. None of them backed off as they clenched their teeth.

It this continued, the match would be decided by the difference in their strength. Even a three year old would know that Banthus with a bigger build had the advantage.

"Hmph! You're just a kid in the end.....Ugh!"

"Don't look down on me because I'm a kid!"

Elsword shouted and Banthus got pushed back. Their engagement was broken and Banthus

stumbled to regain balance..... but Elsword's blade was faster.

Clang!

With a clean sound of clashing metal, Banthus' blade flew into the air and rolled far away. Banthus was devastated after losing his weapon and seeing Elsword point his blade at him.

"Okay. This is the end! I've won Banthus!"

"Uuughh!"

Banthus groaned in frustration. Between Elsword who was perfectly unscathed and Banthus who panted heavily in exhaustion, it was clear who had won.

"That was so cool Mr.Elsword!!"

"That was rather impressive."

Elsword let the compliments pass by and confidently asked Add.

"Are you still going to call me a coward?"

"Kukuk. Then I'll call you an idiot."

"What?"

Elsword was about to get mad when Eve raised her voice.

"It's a high energy reaction. Be careful."

"Huh?"

Shocked, Elsword looked in front of him to see Banthus who was lowering his stance. Then Banthus let out a shout.

Boooom!

Surprisingly a laser shot out from the necklace Banthus was wearing. The physical enhancement from the Nasod Arm wasn't everything. Banthus had prepared this kind of trump card too.

"Ha!"

But Elsword shouted in response and backed off with an unbelievable dexterity dodging the laser's entire trajectory. For Banthus it was an attack that took everything he had even using the chance where Elsword had let his guard down. But it didn't work at all.

"How....!"

"Are you done? Then it's my turn!"

Elsword shouted as he dove into Banthus. Banthus panicked and tried to back off as the distance between them shortened all of a sudden. But Elsword's shout came faster.

"Assault Slash!"

Elsword had approached Banthus in an instant. He gathered all the

forward momentum into the edge of his blade and made a sharp stab. Banthus hurriedly tried to block with his metal arm but.

Crack!

Surprisingly, Elsword's stab with all the force gathered into a single point pierced through Banthus...and shattered his metal arm!

“어설트 슬래시!”



"Assault Slash!"

"Waaaaah!!"

With a scream, Banthus' arm was shattered.

Eve and Ara congratulated Elsword for his perfect victory. Add of course didn't say anything and examined Banthus.

First to confirm if he was still alive, Add couldn't have him die before getting the information out of him. His wounds weren't serious. Maybe it was because he blocked Elsword's attack with a metal arm.

Next, examine the broken metal arm. Eve had discredited it but it didn't have bad durability. Its feature was purely to increase the user's physical ability but having a lot of features didn't always mean it was a good design.

"Hmmm....."

There was no doubt that left arm Nasod, Raven's arm was much more complex and superior to this one. But the fact to pay attention to was that Banthus had appeared with this arm in such a short time, in less than a day.

"Don't pretend to be asleep. Get up."

Add manipulated his Dynamo to send a light electric current through Banthus. Banthus who was lying down hopped back up like a shocked frog.

"Huff, Huff.... W, what was that?"

"Kukuk, Stop overreacting. I adjusted it so there wouldn't be any harm to the body. Of course, from now on I'll make sure there is harm to bodily functions."

Banthus turned deathly pale after hearing Add's words. He actually knew very well that the El Search Party had been going easy on him.

Still.... even if they were strong they were still kids. They wouldn't

do anything horrible....was what Banthus had thought. But there was sign of madness in Add's smile.

"Nevermind. I'll question you later and start off with the electric torture. I'm quite curious about how much increase in endurance human combined with Nasods have."

"Uuuuugh....."

"Try to endure for a long time. I need the data."

Add spoke without a care and was about to manipulate his Dynamos. But Eve approached in a stroke of bad timing.

Add wasn't pleased at how his experiment was interrupted but gave up on manipulating his Dynamos. Eve was his true goal and there was no harm in delaying his experiment.

"Who is it that turned your arm like that?"

"T, that's....."

Eve asked the next question when Banthus didn't answer.

"The Nasods you commanded before were strangely contaminated. How are you related to them?"

"I, I don't know much about this! I'm serious!"

Eve responded calmly to Banthus who was shaking his head frantically.

"Then tell me what you know."

"Some woman, a suspicious woman.... Helped me. She said she'd help me!"

"That woman provided you with the Nasods last time, and now made your arm like this?"

Add had taken a step back when Eve started her interrogation. Add burst out laughing. Eve was stubbornly refusing to call Banthus' arm a Nasod.

"What's so funny?"

"No, continue. Kukuk....."

"....."

Eve looked very insulted but returned to questioning Banthus.

"Am I correct?"

"Y, yea! I don't know her name, since she didn't tell me. But... She was a demon."

".....Demon?"

Everyone was surprised at the sudden appearance of that word. A demon provided such favors to a mere bandit?

Banthus and Demons, those two words didn't fit together no matter how much you thought about it.

"You better not be lying...."

When Add asked threateningly, Banthus' face turned pale again as he shook his head. He must have realized Add's attempt to torture him before wasn't just a simple threat.

"I'm telling the truth! I don't know who that woman is or why she did this to me! I just thought it was a good bargain!"

"Did that demon say anything else?"

When Eve asked calmly Banthus now thought deeply.

It wasn't intended but Add was playing the bad cop that threatened and Eve was playing the good cop that got information.

".....D, I don't know what she meant but she said it was D's orders."

"D?"

"Must be her superior."

Eve nodded calmly. She seemed slightly surprised by appearance of the word Demon but regained her cool composure quickly.

"Understood. Then you can now go back along this path with your men. City's militia will be waiting at the entrance."

"C, Can I really go?"

Banthus looked extremely scared. He was so confident when he was fighting against Elsword earlier.

Now that his arm was broken, he seemed to have lost all confidence.

"Not alone you're not. Ara!"

Soon as she was called, Ara who was talking with Elsword instantly ran towards Add. Add gave directions by gesturing with his chin.

"Take these guys to the entrance of the Waterway. Come back after you hand them over to

Hoffman and the militia."

"Yes! Will do!"

Ara accepted the order without any complaints. But Eve seemed a bit concerned.

"...Will that really be fine?"

"Kukuk, is there a problem?"

Add raised his lips. Eve spoke in a low voice.

"Things might go wrong so it would be better to send one more person with her."

It was a correct indication. Ara was strong but she was clumsy. It was unsettling to send her by herself.

But by the elimination rule there was not enough people to send along with Banthus. Eve was the most important figure to Add so she was out, and Add didn't want to be separated from Eve either.

Elsword was a brat... and under normal circumstances Rena would have been trustworthy but

didn't she waver earlier after looking at Banthus' right arm?

Of course she'd suppress her emotions quickly and react properly..... But leaving Banthus to her was a really bad taste.

So after filtering through the elimination rule, the only remaining person for the job was Ara.

"Just hand them over to the militia then come back."

"Yes, I will!"

"...Will she be alright by herself?"

Eve sounded rather worried but Add wasn't worried. Even though Ara seemed slow and clumsy she had a trump card as well.

If something were to go wrong, that wicked frost fox will probably take care of it.

"Then rest of us will move forwards again."

Demons Banthus had mentioned were hanging on Add's mind but they had to finish the job they started.

The party arrived at the castle's outskirts after passing through the Underground Waterway. They decided to rest for now behind a stone fence that looked difficult to spot. Ara hadn't come back yet and the day was getting darker.

"Wouldn't it be better to move when everyone is sleeping?"

"It's still early evening. It's better to move at dawn."

Elsword nodded when Rena explained calmly. El Search Party were sitting on a stone floor when the cold wind breezed past them.

"Aachuu! Uuugh cold...."

"Temperature is low."

"Hm, if we want to move at dawn it would be better if we got some sleep..... But I guess it's too cold for that huh?"

Hearing the group talk, Add placed his Dynamos in a triangle and lifted another one up to create a tetrahedron field.

"It's an optical camouflage mode. You can now light a fire."

"Oh really?"

"Really?"

Others looked at Add's Dynamos in amazement. No one could see inside this tetrahedron field made by Dynamos when looking from outside.

"To maintain an optical camouflage using such a small tool...that's rather impressive. Of course Nasods can also do this much with ease."

"Kukuk."

Add laughed after hearing Eve's half-praise. It didn't feel bad having her acknowledge the Dynamos he developed.

The group had little worry of being detected now thanks to Add's Dynamos. They managed to light a campfire and have a light meal. Then as Rena had suggested, they decided to sleep so they could move at dawn.

Of course, they were still in enemy territory so they couldn't be careless even with the optical camouflage. So they decided to take turns looking out.

1st lookout was Add.

"Phew...."

When everyone was inside their blankets and was sound asleep, Add clenched his fist and opened them. He met Banthus and found out his story. But doing so had only increased the number of questions.

"I don't think that man had the intelligence to lie."

"...Kukuk, you weren't asleep?"

Add was surprised to hear someone speaking to him but didn't let it show. Eve removed her blankets and moved to face Add across the

campfire.

"Sleep isn't a necessary function for me."

"Right. You're a Nasod."

While Eve didn't look different from humans at all....she was a Nasod. A masterpiece that was built with such advanced technology that she had completely captivated Add.

"If I may continue, that foolish man didn't lie."

"He probably didn't."

Add also nodded in agreement. If Banthus had wanted to lie, he would have made it more believable.....

Banthus wouldn't have got caught so easily inside the cave if he had the ability to freely manipulate the Nasods. He must have gotten them from somebody else.

And that somebody else were the Demons, this did somewhat make sense.

"I didn't hear anything about Demons being in Elder, but I'll have to believe it for now."

"Kukuk that explains why the castle's lord took all the Elder's women. Demons must have requested it."

Add was enjoying himself now that he was talking alone with Eve.

"So organizing the information so far, Elder castle's lord Wally joined up with the Demons and he needed a human underling. That's why he hired Banthus and gave him the Nasods for support just in case. After that he even provided him with that arm."

"Why did he pick such a lame person to be his underling?"

"There's no use trying to figure everything out in detail."

Add summarized the situation.

"I can't even begin to imagine who this 'D' that demon mentioned is, but everything will become clear when we catch Wally and shake him up a bit. Then we'll be able to find out the unknown technique he used to contaminate the Nasods. Kukukuk."

Eve seemed to nod silently then stared straightly at Add.

This was the first time Eve who was always repulsed by Add's one-sided stares stared at Add directly.

"....Do you have something you want to say?"

Add became excited and hesitant at the same time at Eve's unusual reaction.

"I want to ask you something."

"Kukuk, ask anything you want. But, I'll ask a question in return after."

He was all for this kind of game. Who created Eve, what she was made of, her power source, her Core's features, how many codes she had, about her emotion circuits.... Things he wanted to know about her was infinite.

"What is your motive?"

"What?"

"I asked for your motive."

Eve said coldly. The waving from the campfire made shadows across Eve's face.

"What's your reason for joining the El Search Party?"

"That's...."

Add had joined because he was mesmerized by Eve whom he had encountered by chance. Now he wanted to obtain Eve's Core.

"All of the El Search Party members have a goal. Ara Haan wants to return her brother who turned into a demon back to normal, Raven

wants to atone for his sins, Elsword wants to become stronger and surpass his sister and Rena is participating because of her race."

"Kukuk, you're not mentioning yours."

"I'm traveling together in order to rebuild the Nasod civilization. I need the El to do that."

Eve replied in a tone that said she had nothing to hide. Add was surprised at how easily she had revealed her goals.

"Answer."

".....Kukukuk."

Add pondered while laughing. But he couldn't think of an answer immediately. What should he say to get her to believe?

If he answered truthfully by saying he was after Eve's Core..... It was obvious Eve would start to become extremely wary of him. Plans Add had made so far will all be ruined.

But it didn't seem like any story Add made up on the spot would be enough to fool Eve.

"You don't have to say it if you don't want to."

"Wait...."

It would be better to earn Eve's trust. Add ended up recalling old memories because he pondered too much.

"I have someone I want to save."

As he spoke, Add instinctively clenched his fist. This wasn't an act to fool Eve.

"To save that person I need power. An unmatched power. That's why.... I'm traveling with you guys."

"Is that person important to you?"

It took a long time for Add to nod in response. Old memories flowed back at once, all the rage and despair he had felt back then was coming back.

"You don't have to say any more."

It could have been just Add's imagination but Eve's voice had become slightly softer. Add shook his head to shake off the past memories and emotions. Then he grinned coldly at Eve.

"Kukuk, now it's time for my question."

"I already answered by revealing my goals."

"That doesn't count as a question. You just told me on your own."

Eve didn't seem pleased but moved her head up and down slightly.

Finally a historical moment where he can do whatever he wanted with Eve..... No, it was actually a rare chance where he got to ask Eve whatever he wanted.

Add couldn't hide his excitement and quickly ran numerous calculations in his head. How? What should he ask that will help him in his future plans? Or should he just ask something he's curious about?

Eve had significant pride as a Nasod. So if Add beckoned that side of her he could even get multiple answers from a single question. Eve's eyes slightly became colder when Add pondered for a long time

"...This is a bit unpleasant."

"I'm just thinking about it really carefully."

"Ask within 10 seconds."

Eve declared and started counting quietly. Add suppressed his agitation and repeatedly questioned himself quickly about the direction his question would take.

1. Ask about Eve's technology. His lust for knowledge will be satisfied, it will also help in his

'research'.

2. Ask about Eve's battle capabilities. He can use this information

when he steals Eve's core later.

They were both very desirable. While Add was struggling to choose, Eve's voice had already counted up to 8.

"9."

"What relationship do you have with Elsword?"

It must have been an unexpected question because Eve's eyes opened widely.... But that was also same for Add. Add was so shocked that his fingertips were shaking and his vision was turning yellow.

No! Why did he ask about Elsword using this great chance?! He wanted to change his question by turning back time.

Eve calmly replied as Add sat stunned with his mouth open because of what he just said.

"I don't know what you mean by that but I won't let you change your question."

Blocking Add off from changing his question, Eve looked troubled thinking up an answer.

Add after blowing this great chance blamed himself and admitted his failure. But he quickly changed his negative attitude. The chance was already gone but he could maybe use this information.

Like using Elsword as a hostage to make Eve give up her Core on her own. He could use these kinds of tactics.

"To borrow words from humans.... He said he'll be my friend."

"Friend?"

"Of course I didn't accept. It's just what he said on his own."

Eve answered coldly then stole a look back at Elsword who was sound asleep. There was no way Add could tell if her cheeks were slightly red because of the campfire or because of some other reasons.

"Kukuk, that's not enough...."

"This is the end of explanation."

Eve cut off the issue refusing to talk any more about this matter. But Add's mouth didn't stop.

"It's hard to understand using such a simple word. Friends are only established in an equal relationship. Do you think you and that snobby kid are equals?"

"I said I never accepted it."

"If you wanted to, you could tear that guy to shreds in an instant. Just because humans travel with dogs but you don't call them friends."

Hint anger started to show in Eve's face as she listened to Add.

"That's a very rude comparison."

"Kukuk, it's because you didn't explain properly."

Add knew his relationship with Eve would worsen very quickly if this went on..... But his mouth followed his emotions and couldn't stop. Why was that?

Was it because he had remembered the past he had tried so hard to suppress? Or was there some other reason?

Add felt disgusted with himself but didn't stop talking.

"Human and Nasods, There's no way such a weak brat like that and you, the ultimate doll are equals.

Friends? Give me a break."

".....I don't know where you're getting at."

Before long Eve's gears were floating around her. A very hostile reaction, normally this would extremely excite Add but he only got nasty feelings from it right now.

He didn't like how she got this angry just because he had spoken lowly of Elsword.

"You're the only one that thinks you're friends....."

Slap! A gear flew past slapping Add's cheek.

Eve didn't say a word and quietly glared at Add.... You could tell without having to confirm that she was furious.

Feeling the pain from his cheeks, Add twisted his lips and laughed. This was the end of their conversation.

"It's almost time for Ara to come back. I'll go get her."

Add stood up naturally almost as if the conversation just now never took place. He wanted believe it was as naturally as possible.

He could feel the sting of her glare on the back of his head.

"Kukuk."

The castle's outskirts. Add laughed in a low voice as he moved above the castle walls. It would be bad if he was spotted by the castle guards but he didn't care. Actually, Add felt like getting discovered so he could go on a rampage.

Would that help him clear out this dark and cloudy feeling making his heart suffocate?

"I messed up a great chance...."

He only managed to buy Eve's hostility rather than getting any information from Eve through the question. To ruin such a chance that was clearly handed out to him, it was pathetic. But Add decided not to beat himself up over it.

To be able to steal the core easily, it was correct to get on Eve's favorable side and make her let her guard down.... But things don't always work out as intended.

Just like how Add hadn't intended on coming to this age, or how he joined this strange group called the El Search Party.

"Ah, Mr.Add!"

Add heard a bright voice when he was bathing in the night breeze in self-deprecation. When Add continued to ignore the voice, he could hear the footsteps coming closer to him.

"Did you come to get me because I might get lost? Thank you!"

Since Ara didn't know where the campfire was Add should guide her back. But he didn't want to head back right now. Ara asked worriedly when Add continued to quietly stare in front.

"Mr.Add is there something wrong?"

"Just a bit longer...."

Add turned around to tell Ara but his face stiffened. Just like before Ara's hair had turned white, and her eyes were dyed in red.

And the nine white tails.

"You are right now...."

"Ah, Mr.Add already spoke with Lord Eun right? Lord Eun hasn't fully surfaced right now. I'm Ara."

Ara explained while smiling. But this form of Ara's was disturbing for Add. It was because Eun who had appeared before Add in the same form was such an inconceivable existence.

"I met with some soldiers on my way here. I ended up fighting so I had to borrow Lord Eun's powers a bit."

"Turn back to normal."

"Pardon? Huh?um Mr.Add?"

Ara asked with a confused expression.

"Lord Eun says she wants to speak with Mr.Add by herself. Would that be alright?"

"Tell her I decline."

Add didn't know what Eun was thinking but he wasn't in any mood for conversation. Despite the clear refusal Ara stuttered.

"Lord Eun told me to say that since Mr.Add 'has more time than everyone else' can he please spare her some."

"...."

Add felt a sting in his heart and glared at Ara. Surprised, Ara shrunk after facing such a menacing glare. But she didn't go back on her words.

Add glared at Ara for a while before taking his eyes off her. All Ara did was convey the message, facing her didn't serve any purpose.

"Bring her."

"I'm already here boy."

Ara's eyes seemed to narrow as she made a wicked smile.

Seeing a girl who was smiling innocently until just now make such a bewitching smile.... Add couldn't get used to it.

"Thank you for listening to my request boy. So where shall we start?"

"Before that..... Do something about that appearance."

He couldn't get used to her acting so voluptuous in Ara's appearance. Eun laughed frantically at Add's words.

"Are you afraid that you might get bewitched by my charms? You don't have to worry. I won't eat boy's liver or anything."

"I can't distinguish you from Ara. Even if you're borrowing her body, make it so you guys are distinguishable."

That Celestial Fox mode with white hair, red eyes and tails could be categorized into two states.

State where Ara's consciousness was still intact and a state where Eun's consciousness fully comes to the surface. But the two states were indistinguishable by appearance.

At Add's request, Eun seemed to ponder for a moment then snapped her fingers.

Then with a 'poof', two pointy fox ears appeared on Ara's head.

"Are you satisfied now boy? I can keep going until you're satisfied if you're not."

"Just what do you want to say?"

Add stiffly glared at Ara, no Eun.

He was in a very unpleasant mood right now. And such a suspicious being with an unclear motive was smiling at him mischievously. This made Add uncomfortable and annoyed.

"I want to bask in the night breeze along with the boy. Is that not good enough of a reason?"

"If you're going to say something meaningless I'm going to head back."

Eun burst out laughing when Add was about to head back.

"Wouldn't it be very uncomfortable for you to go back right now? Didn't you have a fight with the girl just now boy?"

"....."

A chill went down Add's spine as he looked back. But no matter how Add glared at her, Eun continued to make a smile that he couldn't measure the depth of.

"Now are you willing to spend the night with me boy?"

"Just what is your motive?"

Ironically, he ended up asking the same question Eve had asked him earlier. Add asked menacingly while unfolding the leftover Dynamos he had from setting up the optical camouflage. But Eun's wicked smile didn't waver at all to the point where it scared Add.

Just what trick did she use to find out about the argument he just had with Eve? Can she see far out up to thousand miles or something?

And she also knew how Add was after Eve..... For Add, Eun wasn't

something he could let his guard down against.

"You don't have to be so serious. Didn't I tell you from the start? I'm on boy's side."

"...."

"I'll help the boy obtain the girl. Isn't that what boy wants?"

Eun who was borrowing Ara's body held out her hand.

Add had thought about this before. To steal Eve's core and obtain Eve it was better to have someone in the El Search Party be on his side.

He had no reason to refuse if it was not the slow Ara, but Eun borrowing Ara's body that wanted to help him.

"Just what are you? I asked for your motive. Just what do you want from me?"

But she was too suspicious. There was no way she was saying she would help without any ulterior motives.

"I want boy to ask for my aid."

"I refuse. I'll obtain Eve with my own strength."

This was the second refusal. Eun was too suspicious of an entity and there was no way for him to figure out her motives. He didn't want to join up with such a being.

"That's too bad...."

Eun made a thin sigh after having the hand she held out rejected again.

Instead of the bewitching smile she was making before, she made a laugh filled with vain. Then she stared at Add regrettably.

"Boy will experience something cruel soon. Don't hesitate to ask me for help when that time comes."

"I won't ever need your help."

Eun slowly closed her eyes as Add coldly shot back. Then Eun suddenly opened her eyes wide and looked around in confusion.

"Ah! Did you have a nice conversation with Lord Eun?"

"....."

Judging by the way she spoke, it was Ara. Add was sure because although she still had the white hair, red eyes and the tails, the fox ears that had appeared on her head earlier were gone.

"You can't listen?"

Eun did speak about this before but Add asked just to be sure. When Ara was on the surface Eun seemed to be able to hear the conversations that were going on. But Ara seemed to fall asleep when Eun came to the surface.

"I fall asleep because I lack training. I'll have to train more."

Ara scratched her head in embarrassment as she waved her hand. Eun's second proposal, saying she'd lend Add her strength all of a sudden.

Also about how he'll suffer something cruel.

A lot of things hung on Add's mind but he decided to not think about them. It was a waste of time to think about when he didn't even know of her motive.

"Oh look its Mr.Phoru!"

"....What?"

What nonsense is she talking about this late at night? Is she making fun of how Add had mentioned Phoru inside the cave before?

Add turned towards where Ara was looking then opened his mouth widely in shock.

There really was a Phoru.

A Phoru was trying his best to climb over the castle wall.

"Hmph! Hmph!"

"Give it your best Mr.Phoru!"

Ara cheered for the Phoru with her fists clenched tightly. She seemed to have completely forgotten they were here to infiltrate the castle. But Add was too shocked himself to stop her from cheering.

"What? I've been found out?!"

The surprised Phoru looked back because of the cheer(?) and find Ara and Add. The Phoru pulled out his sword and then shouted.

"I'm the great bandit William! This castle is now mine! Everyone attack!!"

"Waaaaah!!"

Responding to William's call, tens of Phorus climbed over the castle wall at once. But no matter how many there were, Phorus were Phorus. Even Add alone could clean them all up but.

"...This is bad."

RingRingRingRing! A bell started ringing across the castle.

The soldiers had awoken because the Phorus were causing a ruckus around the castle.

Instantly reading the situation, Add grabbed the back of Ara's clothes and jumped on his dynamos and started the low flight mode.

"Kyah! M, Mr.Add!?"

"Stay still, you're going to get hurt."

But Ara seemed to twist herself backwards all of a sudden then freed herself from Add's grasp. Add was taken aback by this strange technique. Ara now ran alongside him with a look saying that was nothing.

Even though Add was flying on Dynamos, Ara kept up with him.

"Mr.Add? Why are we running away?"

"We got found out because of the Phorus. Our mission has been compromised since the soldiers increased their security."

"Oh I see! Then what should we do?"

Ara was innocently asking Add for a solution. Ara wasn't any different from her usual self but it was surprising to see her keep up so easily with the Dynamo's flying speed.

"Isn't that obvious? We should wake everyone and start moving!"

"Okay! Then I'll be going ahead!"

Ara nodded with a bright smile then ran forwards. Unbelievable, although she was running with two human legs, she just surpassed the Dynamo's flying speed.

".....I should revamp the flight feature next time."

Although it was probably because Ara's dash was fast enough to surpass human limits.

Everyone was already awake and armed when Add arrived at the campsite thinking about future modifications.

"Add, just what's going on?"

"If you came earlier than me why didn't you explain it to them?"

Ara who had arrived earlier than Add protested.

"I did!"

"I just can't seem to understand what Ara is saying...."

Add stared coldly at Ara hearing Elsword mutter in confusion.

"W, why are you looking at me like that?"

"Give me the same explanation you gave to everyone."

"That is! Mr.Phoru appeared along with other Phorus. He hit his bottom as he jumped inside the castle and I'm worried if he's hurt. Since everyone is now awake we should move quickly too!"

"....."

There are too many unnecessary details! Let's not leave the situation report to Ara next time.....

"Ah, come to think of it I've seen that Mr.Phoru before! It was the same one I met when I was training with Mr.Elsword."

"Ah, you mean William? He's here again?"

"I'm not sure."

Add shook his head in dismay while listening to Ara and Elsword talk on the same level. It wasn't like him but it looked like he had to do the situation report.

"Anyways, that weird Phoru brought others into the castle and are running amok right now. The castle's soldiers are awake now thanks to them. It's only a matter of time before we get discovered too so we should move quickly."

"Couldn't we stay hidden like before?"

Elsword asked but Add shook his head.

"I can't maintain the optical camouflage mode all day and there's high possibility that we'll be found."

"It's better for us to move right now when soldiers' attention are drawn to the Phorus"

Add let out a low laugh after explaining this much.

Come to think of it, why does it matter if we are found out or not? Other members had the goal of rescuing the captive girls but that had nothing to do with Add.

He was in a foul mood. This was a great chance for him to go on a stress relieving rampage.

"Kukukuk, whatever. Now that it's turned out like this. Let's flip this castle upside down. Since we've been found out, we'll destroy this entire castle. No matter how many soldiers there are they are mere small fries to us."

"All right let's go!"

Elsword stood up without hesitation with the sword in his hand.

But Rena pondered for a moment then proposed another course of action.

"Our mission is to confirm what happened to captured girls and if possible, rescue them. What Add said also makes sense but we can't let our priorities get mixed up."

"Then let's divide into teams."

Add didn't have any objection to Rena's opinion. He didn't care about the captives but he also didn't care if the others wanted to save them.

"Kukukuk, one team will purposely run amok inside the castle and cause a disturbance to draw attention of the soldiers. The other team will use that chance to search the castle for the captives.

Any objections?"

"I'll look for the girls that were captured. Add you take care of the disturbance."

Rena just said that to decide the team's leaders. If Raven was here it would be fine if Rena and Raven each led a team, but he still hasn't joined up with them yet. He's probably looking more into the matter in Ruben before heading to Elder.

Elsword and Ara weren't suitable to be leaders and Eve was rather unknowledgeable about the human world. In Rena's eyes, Add was the best person for the job.

"Kahahaha, Fine I'll enjoy this."

Seeing Add accept with a laugh, Rena nodded then examined the group again and pointed out Elsword.

"Elsword, you come with me to rescue the girls."

"What? That's bothersome...."

Elsword didn't look too pleased; he must have wanted to be in the disturbance group.

Eve frowned and raised her hand.

"If it's searching for the hostages I'll go."

"No, you can't."

Rena sternly shook her head. Balance was important when dividing up the teams and Rena had put much thought into her decision.

You never know what might happen so Rena couldn't move by herself. Thinking of the team's balance it would be best if Rena and someone else became the search team and the other three became the disturbance team.....

"Since I use a bow it's better for Elsword who uses a sword to come with me. Eve you should help Add."

"....."

Eve reluctantly nodded. Add who was in high spirits was now feeling disturbed recalling the uncomfortable atmosphere was created between him and Eve earlier.

But Rena's decision was sound considering how Eve could attack further in range than Ara and Add.

No one could object.

"Then let's meet up at the castle gates after 1 hour. I'll go on ahead! Keep up Elsword!"

"Alright let's go!"

Rena quickly dashed off and Elsword also followed with all he had.

When only three of them were left Add made a fake cough and looked behind at Ara. Even fools had their uses. In a situation like this he'll put Ara on the spot to smooth over this uncomfortable atmosphere-.....

"Flight technique!!"

Ara was already dashing down towards the bottom of the castle

wall. Add was at a loss for words looking at this strange technique where Ara was stepping on mid air. Ara shouted from afar.

"I'll start first!"

"....."

Why does that clumsy idiot have to be so motivated right now?

Add muttered inside his head as he made two fake coughs. He hadn't intended it but he was alone with Eve. They had to share opinions and plans before they started the battle.

"Um....."

But Eve was already walking towards the opposite direction of where Rena had dashed off. Unlike Ara, she must be planning to walk down.

Add who was left alone by himself frowned for a moment then flew his Dynamos in front of Eve to stop her. Eve looked back at Add after stopping.

She had the look of displeasure in her eyes.

".....How many years are you planning to waste getting down there by walking?"

"I don't have any gravity defying or sustained flight capabilities."

At Eve's cold response, Add retracted his Dynamos and stood on top of them. Then extended his hand towards Eve.

"Come, I'll help you go down."

"I'll have to refuse."

".....Since Rena asked me. I'm the leader right now. You have to follow what I say."

It wasn't the leader position Add got so he could abuse it like this, but he tried abusing it anyways.

Also, Eve tended to listen to Rena so she shouldn't be able to refuse him easily.

Eve stopped to think for a moment just as Add had calculated.

"That looks like it's only for 1 person. How do you expect me to get on?"

"I'll make it work somehow."

Eve quietly stared at the hand Add had extended out to her.

"Dragon Fang!!"

They didn't know exactly what was going on at the bottom but they could hear bunch of screams, Ara's shouts and the sound of people getting beat up. Ara must be having fun running wild by herself.

"I don't really want to but, I'll make use of that this once."

"Hold on tight."

Eve grabbed Add's hand with a disapproving expression. If it was any other moment, Add's lust for research would have exploded soon as they held hands. But Add suppressed it with all his might right now as he brought Eve up on the Dynamo.

"...Ugh."

Dynamo flight was originally for 1 person. The balance of the entire thing shook up and down due to overcapacity soon as Eve got on. That wasn't all. Unlike Add, Eve didn't have much space to stand on so she almost fell over backwards.

"I told you to hold on tight."

Add muttered as he put his arms around Eve's waist to have her lean on him. Totally surprised, Eve tried to push him away but Add held her tightly even more.

"I won't do anything strange. So stay calm."

Add spoke in an undertone as he flew the dynamos carefully. Since Ara was fighting the soldiers right below them it would be better to land a bit further away.

"..."

Soon as the flight had started, Eve who had tried to push Add away before did not resist anymore.

Add was hugging her but she must have realized it was necessary.

"...Phew."

Normally Add would have wanted to analyze more about the blush that was showing on Eve's cheeks and marvel at her perfection. But he didn't this time.

The stuffy feeling in his heart he's been having was slightly relieved while he hugging her.

"About before.... I was too harsh with my words."

"...."

Add was also surprised at what he had just said. But he had started speaking already. There was no choice but to go with it. Add was glad that he was hugging Eve from the back because he didn't have to talk while looking at her face directly.

"If I offended you.... I'm sorry."

After a little gap Eve replied coldly.

"Your logic is flawed. First of all, I don't have an emotion. So I cannot be offended thus you're wrong."

"...."

So she's going to argue that she doesn't have emotions? Add was at a loss for words but Eve hadn't finished speaking.

"Although I may look like this, I'm the Queen of Nasods. I'd never lose my composure and act on impulse."

"Do you...."

Honestly expect me to believe that? Just when the flabbergasted Add was about protest,

"So there's no reason for you to apologize, Add"

She called him by his name for the first time



After realizing this fact late, Add was at a loss for words and couldn't speak. He had never felt something like this before so he couldn't decide what to do.

His heart was beating weirdly; and the blood rushing to his face was blocking all logical way of thinking.

'Was it a side effect after all? Something must be wrong with my mind and body. I should dissect myself!'

Eve broke free from Add's arms while Add was seriously considering dissecting himself. Shocked Add stretched out his hand towards Eve as she moved further away. Eve stopped at a distance where tip of his hand could barely touch her clothes. She gave Add a look that said she couldn't understand.

"What are you doing? Is that some sort of end-of-flight motion?"

They had already arrived at the surface. Dynamo had finished its flight and they had landed safely on the ground.

".....Void Impact!!"

Add shouted all of a sudden as he opened his stretched out hand. An alternate space opened up far away and the soldiers in the area fell screaming. Add laughed loudly while waving his arm in the air.

"Kahaha! This castle is mine from this point on!! All of you should be honored to be sacrificial experiments for my research!! Obey me!

"There were no such plans. Also was there a problem during the flight? Your face is red."

Add pretended he hadn't heard Eve's cold evaluation and continue to laugh. Frantically and louder than usual.

"Oh, you're down already?"

"Kahahaha! Good timing Ara! Hurry up and lead the charge!"

Add had never been so glad to see Ara. Ara nodded and fixed her spear seeing Add welcome her with open arms.

It was already after Ara had ran rampant amongst the soldiers so the soldiers didn't dare to attack first when they saw Ara.

"Then I'll open a path in the front! I'll ask both of you follow me and assist!"

Ara performed a single somersault after saying that. Then her hair turned white. Celestial Fox mode, she was borrowing Eun's power.

"Pulling Pierce!"

Three soldiers in front of her flew off as Ara thrust with her spear. Soldiers couldn't do anything but to scream and fall before Ara as she attacked with such mesmerizing movement as if she was dancing,

"Good! That's great!"

Add praised Ara even to the point where he was clapping. Eve stared at Add carefully and asked.

"Now your ears are red too. If you're not feeling well you can back out and rest."

"Kukukuk, Kahahaha! You won't regret it!!"

Add pretended not to hear Eve and manipulated the Dyanmos to help Ara by attacking the soldiers.

Eve finally diverted her attention and started to manipulate her gears to defeat the soldiers.

Add was glad she wasn't paying attention to him anymore.

"Kahaha!!"

Because he was seriously embarrassed right now.

There were lots of soldiers but they couldn't withstand even for a moment the attacks of Ara, Add and Eve. Phorus were also running amok inside the castle setting fire to various places as well so their forces were divided.

Thanks to that the disturbance team could reach the castle's

garden without much effort. They had defeated over 100 soldiers on their way but all of the team members didn't even have a scratch on them.

There were 20 soldiers guarding the garden but the disturbance team weren't worried. Only one of them could make a short work of these soldiers.

The disturbance team approached the soldiers thinking this would be easy;

-Operational.

Then they heard an ominous mechanical sound. Three of them instinctively stopped and looked around.... They saw a giant metal machine closing in on them.

A crude outer shell.

"What is that?"

Despite its shabby appearance the machine piqued Add's interest as a researcher. Soldiers were surprised when they saw the machine and distanced themselves as they shouted.

"It's Wally Robot No.44! Everyone be careful!"

"Don't approach carelessly!!"

Add sneered after hearing the soldiers make such a ruckus. What's so scary about that piece of junk?

"Kukuk, I'll turn it into a scrap metal in an instant."

".....It's dangerous."

But Eve had a very tense expression. Add was fascinated seeing Eve look so troubled when she had self-proclaimed to have no emotions before. Add let out a laugh.

"What? Could it be that you're think that's a Nasod? Don't worry I'll destroy it without impacting the Core. If that one is also contaminated like last time...."

"No, we have to retreat."

Eve shook her head strongly as she hesitantly backed off. Add didn't know for what reason but Eve was very cautious of that thing called the Wally Robot.

Add was dumfounded. Eve was very skilled herself and yet why was she afraid of that piece of junk?

"Here I go!"

As Wally Robot approached them Eve demanded they retreat and Add was too startled by Eve's reaction to make a decision. But Ara bravely jumped at the new enemy.

Wally Robot's mono-eye shined in response to Ara's quick charge as it executed a command.

-Rocket Punch!

Boom! With a terrifying explosion Wally Robot's fist started to fly towards Ara. Ara was surprised at the unexpected attack method but she quickly stabbed her spear into the ground to use it as a pole to launch her into the air.

Such a nimble evasion! As Ara reached the maximum height and fixed her form to attack the Wally Robot.... A chill went down her spine.

-Rocket Punch!!

Wally Robot was bipedal, it had two arms and of course two fists. This time its other fist flew furiously at Ara. She hurriedly tried to dodge by stepping on midair but it was too late.

"Kyaah!!"

Ara had managed to avoid getting hit directly by blocking with her spear but Ara's body was launched into the air from the shock. Add stretched out his hand with a surprised expression after watching all of this unfold.

"Void Impact!"

-Terminating Dimensional Interference

An alternate space appeared on Wally Robot's body but there was no harm to the Wally Robot unlike the other enemies. Surprise seeped into Add's face as he pulled his hand in to retract his Dynamos.

Did..... That tin can just ignore an alternate space attack? He couldn't believe his eyes.

Creak! Wally Robot aimed its fist at Add who was still blinking from mental shock. Add was late in realizing the meaning of the robot's movements and couldn't move in time. Wally Robot announced with a mechanical voice.

-Rocket Punch!

Add finally came to his senses after hearing the attack command and tried to move but the rocket punch was already too close to him. There was not enough time for him to quickly change into the dimension distortion mode.

It's going to hit!!

As Add clenched his teeth preparing for the impact, a mechanical whip snapped in front of Add to hit the ground and caused a chain explosion. The incoming rocket punch seemed to get caught up in the explosion. The fist stopped advancing and went back to the Wally Robot's arm.

Clank. Wally Robot approached them with heavy strides after recovering its arm.

"Don't stand there dazed."

Eve approached and criticised Add after she retracted her whip. Add finally came to his senses and stared at Eve to his left.

"It's already too late to run away. We'll have to fight together."

"I got it!"

Ara who had somehow managed to land safely after getting hit by

the rocket punch approached and stood on Add's right. Even though it wasn't a direct hit, Ara's face was pale and her clothes were tattered. You could tell that she took a significant damage.

But there was no doubt in her voice.

"Just like before I'll go in front to buy time. I'll leave the support to you both."

"Will that be alright?"

Add who had been frozen up till now finally managed to say something. Add couldn't easily shake off the shock of witnessing a sudden appearance of an existence that surpassed his expectations and technology.

But Ara looked much more motivated than usual.

"I won't lose long as I have the heart of justice on my side!"

"You might lose if you attack carelessly."

"I'll be fine! Because I have you two helping me!"

Ara smiled brightly and stared at Add and Eve. Eve made a troubled sigh as if she gave up arguing with Ara then looked at Add.

Eve spoke to Add who still couldn't completely shake off the mental shock.

"If the leader role is too much for you then hand it over to me."

".....Who said it's too much?"

Add instinctively got riled up and shook his head. He stared at the Wally Robot that was slowly approaching them. He couldn't figure out where this abomination came from but he could figure that out later leisurely after he tore it down to pieces.

"Kukukuk, I'll turn you into a scrap metal you piece of junk!"

With Add's laugh as the signal, Ara charged in front towards the Wally Robot.

Wally Robot No.44 had suddenly appeared before the disturbance

team and the team was having quite a bit of trouble fighting against it.

-Multi-Missile launch.

"Kugh!"

The robot's stomach opened and 10 missiles shot out. Add manipulated his Dynamos to shoot down each of the missiles. He couldn't leave this task to Eve because she was too busy supporting Ara.

"Hornet Sting!"

Eve also materialized missiles of her own and landed a direct hit on the Wally Robot. But her missiles didn't even leave a visible dent.

"This way!"

Panting heavily, Ara was also attacking the Wally Robot the best she could. But she wasn't able to deal any visible damage to it either.

Their enemy was a robot; it won't tire no matter how long they fought so the current situation was disadvantageous for the disturbance team if this dragged on.

"Kuk, Void Field!"

Add in false hope tried creating an alternative space around him and tried to tie the Wally Robot down. But unlike the other enemies it didn't work.

Wally Robot stood firmly on the Void Field and swung its arm to attack Ara. Fortunately, Ara was managing to dodge all of its attacks by a hair breadth.... But she wouldn't be able to keep that up forever.

"Kugh....."

If the space related abilities didn't work, it meant Add's battle capabilities were halved. That's why he was focusing on the support role.... But how long can they keep this up?

"Ugh!?"

Add could see that Ara's evasion was getting duller.

"Explosion Impact!"

And Eve's attacks weren't doing any significant damage. They'll get wiped out like this.

"Kugh, just where did that abomination...."

Its outer appearance was that of a junk, but Eve's deduction was correct. Add wanted retreat now just like Eve suggested. But that was not possible anymore.

Tens of soldiers had already formed encirclement around them. They weren't attacking.... But if the disturbance team tried to retreat they were enough of a distraction to delay the team for a moment.

Wally Robot will never miss that chance.

'What should he do...?'

Actually Add wasn't using his full strength. He had a hidden power, a secret skill he kept concealed just in case.

The reason he wasn't using it despite their obvious disadvantage was.... For the future.

For the day when he acted to steal Eve's core. To overcome the obvious resistance of the El Search Party, he needed couple of hidden skills.

Add was extremely reluctant to reveal it here. Revealing it now will surely get in his way later.

"Ugh!!"

"Ms.Eve!"

A Rocket Punch flew towards Eve. She tried to dodge it the best she could but ended up getting hit.

She seemed to have managed to defend herself so she wasn't seriously injured but the shock pushed her body back towards Add.

"Are you alright?"

Add asked impatiently still pondering whether to use his secret skill or not. All of his plans would mean nothing if Eve was destroyed because of his hesitation. Just when Add resolved himself to use his hidden skill, Eve cut Add off as she spoke first.

"It's nothing. This much is child's play compared to Nasods."

"Is that so? Then just what is that thing?"

"I don't know. It's similar to something I know but different."

"...Is that a Nasod?"

Eve didn't answer Add's serious question. Judging by her reaction, she had no choice but to admit its capabilities but she didn't want to say it out loud.

No, who cares if it's a Nasod or not! The issue was that the situation was getting worse as the time progressed. He had to make a decision while Ara was fending it off by herself.

"I'll...."

"I'll finish this. Distance is important for this skill so I'd like you to draw its attention for a bit."

Eve spoke before Add could. She let out a thin sigh and stared at Add with an odd gaze.

"My functions will decrease for a moment after I use this skill. I'd like you to cover me during that time."

"....Got it."

Looks like Eve also had a hidden skill. There was no reason for Add to reveal his if that was the case.

"Owie!"

Ara had been dodging all of the Wally Robot's attacks so far but it seemed her luck had run out as she made a cute scream and got pushed back. She had managed to dodge the critical hit but blood was now dripping down her cheek. There was no time to hesitate.

"Kukuk then I'll go ahead!"

Add didn't know what Eve was planning but there was no time to ask her. After getting on his Dynamos Add started the flight mode and flew up.

Actually even if the soldiers had them surrounded, Add could have escaped by himself using the Dynamo's flight ability. But why didn't he?

'.....That's obvious. Because there's no point in leaving without Eve.'

Eve, the technology used to make her and her Nasod Core was absolutely necessary for Add's plans.

He couldn't just abandon her and run away.

"Kahahaha! Where are you looking?!"

Add flew above the Wally Robot and fired shockwaves on it. Wally Robot frantically waved its arm trying to catch him. Add continued to shock the Wally Robot maintaining a dicey altitude where the robot's arm wouldn't reach him.

Shockwaves weren't strong as the skills that shattered space. But the shockwaves caused by these Dynamos weren't anything to laugh at as well. Add could see the Wally Robot's face shattering and a crack starting to form on its shoulder.

"Kukuk, so it's not invincible....!"

Add let out a hysteric laugh after finally seeing some visible damage. It wasn't that the attacks of Ara and Eve weren't working. They just didn't show. If Add continued attacking it like this he could win.

-Rocket Punch!

Wally Robot must have realized the situation too because it launched both of its fists at Add. But Add didn't waver and used high-flight, descent, upside down drop and various other flight

manoeuvres to toy with the fists and dodged them all.

His goal was to draw its attention; Eve will deal the finishing blow.

Add stole a look while flying around dodging and saw that Eve had taken up position not too far away from Ara.

'This is it....!'

Add thought while continuing to dodge the rocket punches.....

Suddenly the side of the encirclement of soldiers broke. A red haired boy was swinging blade taller than himself to hit the soldiers away. The boy then struck the ground with his sword and shouted.

"Flame Geyser!!"

"Uwaaaah!"

The soldiers were blown away by the pillar of fire that shot out of the ground. Add couldn't help but doubt what he just saw.

"Is everyone alright? I'm here to help!!"

It was Elsword. Elsword had somehow found out that the disturbance team was in danger and had come to assist..... But Add was more surprised about the scene that just happened in front of his eyes.

Before, Elsword was clearly a weakling that even had trouble beating Banthus..... But he was now skillfully defeating the castle's soldiers. Of course he was still nothing compared to Add but his growth was unbelievably fast.

"Tch...."

Add felt displeased and covered his face with one of his hand. Rocket punches were still following right behind him.

Add flipped himself upside down mid-flight to examine the situation on the ground. Elsword who had completely destroyed the encirclement of soldiers was now jumping at the Wally Robot.

Thankfully, Eve didn't waste time paying attention to Elsword and

poised for an attack.

"Junk Break!!"

A giant shredder was summoned right in front of Eve with her command. The shredder pierced through the Wally Robot's body and started to rotate making a terrifying noise.

As the name shredder implied..... She was going shred the Wally Robot into bits!

-Kiiiiii!

Unlike the Add's space manipulation ability, this skill physically created a shredder and shredded the target into pieces. Wally Robot couldn't do anything about it. Wally Robot seemed to withstand the attack for a bit. But when the shredder's rotation continued, its parts started flying out with a spark.

With its body now torn to shreds, Wally Robot kneeled down as its head exploded. The fists that were chasing Add also exploded in mid air.

"Very impressive."

Good thing Add saw this skill now. It was a terrifying skill. Add could have been done in by it in the future if he didn't know about it.

-Kiiiiiii....

The shredder slowed its spinning then disappeared.

The situation seemed mostly clear so Add landed a little distance away from rest of the group.

"What, it's over already?"

Elsword who was charging at the robot bravely withdrew his sword in disappointment. Eve was keeling on the ground panting. She looked at Elsword with a dreamy expression.

"Tch...."

Add didn't like how Eve was making that expression. When Add

was about to ignore it and turn his head around.... A loud scream was heard.

"It's a high energy reaction!!"

That voice was Ara's-no it was Eun's judging by the solid tone. Surprised, Add looked in front to see that a white energy was gathering near the Wally Robot's chest.

-Breast Beam.

The robot's target was Elsword who was standing in front of it; he'll get hit directly like this.

"Hmph."

Add didn't care what happened to Elsword. But Eve might get caught up in it so he should evacuate her! Without any second thoughts Add was in middle of getting on his Dynamos when he froze on spot.

Finally free from the side effect of Junk Break, Eve threw her body.

"No....."

Add knew what her action meant and a scream started to gush out from his mouth.

And pushed away Elsword who couldn't prepare in time.

"Nooooooooo!!!"

Add's cry rang across the garden as Eve's body was consumed by a giant beam.



Even till the final moment her eyes were looking at Elsword.

Energy beam must have been Wally Robot's last attempt at struggle because it fell over and exploded afterwards. Add clenched his fists and hurried towards the direction that Eve got flown away.

"It's fine. She's a Nasod....."

Normal human would have been killed but since she was a Nasod she would have somehow fended it off. She must have had something like an emergency defense code!!

She must have had it! If she didn't I'm going to kill everything!

As what seemed like an eternity had passed, Add finally arrived and rolled off his Dynamos and ran towards where Eve was.

Just as he had hoped, Eve was fine. She lay quietly with her eyes closed, with her tiny hands on top of her body.

She didn't even have a scratch on her although she was consumed by a high heat energy beam.

".....Thank goodness."

Add held his shaking knees with his hands and let out a heavy sigh of relief. Thank god she was a Nasod.

Thank goodness she was alright.....

Crack.

A sound shook Add's heart. Sound of something cracking.

Crack.

Sound of something breaking.

".....Ah."

Add stared devastated. He could tell which part of Eve was wrong. On her white forehead, on her Core that shined blue, a small crack forming.

"N, No...."

The Core was Nasod's nucleus. If compared to humans it was akin to their heart. Eve's current situation was.... In human terms her heart was shattering.

Add hastily pressed on Eve's Core with both of his hands. But he already knew it wouldn't change a thing. The Core made even more cruel cracking noises and then.....completed its demolition as it shined for a moment with white light before losing its color.

"Ah....."

Add took his hands off the Core and let out a cry in vain. There were thousands of cracks on Eve's Core now.

It would all break and scatter if he'd just tip it with his finger.....

"Ahaha."

Add clenched his fists tightly and let out a laugh. It was so nonsensical that he laughed. Elegant mechanical doll that he finally had managed to get close to, a one of a kind treasure was shattered before his eyes.

Hmm, how can he explain this feeling? Feeling of a sommelier....that kept a precious one of a kind wine and was bidding for the day he'd open it. Only to see it get destroyed before his eyes?

Maybe it's the feeling of witnessing a masterpiece drawn by a genius painter of caliber that will never again exist in history..... Then seeing the said painting get torn apart by a stupid red haired brat?

"Kukukuk, kahahahaaha."

His shoulders shook as he laughed. Add looked up towards the sky. In front of him right now was Eve's corpse, no Eve's remains.

Core was Nasod's nucleus; she will never open her eyes again.

Eve was dead. Well that was the human term. Should he say she

was scrapped? Add coldly rewrote the definition in his head.

He had to keep his cool. Otherwise it actually felt like he'd kill everything.

"What happened to Ev....?"

Hearing the worried shout of a boy approach him, Add kicked the ground to stand up and

immediately threw a punch at the boy. The impact felled the boy before he could even make a sound.

"Die."

Add moved the Dynamos without hesitation. Elsword wiped his face and made a confused

expression.

Even so, Elsword spoke without worrying about his own bleeding wounds.

"Is Eve okay?"

"If you won't kill yourself, I'll kill you instead!!"

Hearing him blurt out Eve's name disgusted Add. He increased the output to destroy Elsword's body into bits. A shadow jumped out all of a sudden and swung its spear to swiftly hit all the Dynamos away.

"Boy, Calm down."

Ara, no it was Eun who had surfaced completely after pushing Ara's consciousness aside. Add stared at Eun indifferently then swung his arm to move the Dynamos again.

He didn't care who got in his way, he'd just kill them all together.

Add moved his Dynamos without hesitation again. Eun's appearance seemed to fade. Then all of a sudden her spear was aiming at Add's neck.

"Boy, I told you to calm down."

"..."

Add ignored the spear pointing at his neck and manipulated the Dynamos towards Elsword. A shockwave was forming along with the sound of Dynamos operating.

The most painful way to kill him as possible, Add was about to blow each of Elsword body parts off while Elsword was still alive.

Spear? If she intended to stab him she would have already done so. Eun, just like the other members was just too soft. Eun read Add's thoughts and withdrew her spear as she frowned.

"The words 'mending the barn after the horse is stolen' doesn't seem to fit here. Would 'destroying the house after losing a lover' be more appropriate?"

"Move."

He can't see Elsword with Eun in the way. He had to see him die.

"Boy, you're correct in that I cannot harm you. I'm on boy's side after all. Even if he was to lose his mind and try to kill his comrades."

"I told you to move."

Add ignored Eun's words as he grabbed her shoulders and pushed her aside. He didn't want to hear any lecture about how Eve won't come back even if he were to kill Elsword.

"But instead of wasting his emotions like this, wouldn't it be better for the boy to go save the girl instead?"

"..."

Add was about to flick his fingers but stopped. What Eun just said made him freeze.

"What did you just..."

"Boy, I already know about everything. About how boy is not a human from this age."

Eun spoke of the secret Add had kept hidden all along without a

hint of smile in her face. Add's pupils widened in surprise that Eun even knew of this fact as well. But Eun told him without a hint of bragging in her voice.

"And I also know how boy needs higher technology in order to travel through time again. And that's why boy tried to obtain the girl's core."

"...The core's already broken."

Add tried staring at Eve with false sense of hope but abruptly turned his head back around. He couldn't bear to watch any longer.

"If you're trying to say I should examine the broken core...."

"That wouldn't be necessary."

Eun finally smiled and gently shook her tails. She acted very confident in front of Add who was emitting thirst for blood.

"Boy arrived in this age by coincidence, so he can't carelessly jump through time again, he must move carefully, I know about these calculations yours. However, if I may give my opinion as the one who can see the future....."

Eun's eyes narrowed.

"A simple travel. If its couple days of time travel, it can be done without much trouble."

"Don't make me laugh. Dynamo as they are right now cannot interpret the time wave function. If I tried to travel 1 second, I could travel 10 years instead...."

"But it's possible together with me."

Eun held out her hand in response to Add's denial. It was the 3rd time she held her hand out to him.

"Didn't I tell you? I'm on boy's side. I'll help the boy get to the time he desires. Time where girl still exists."

"...."

Add wasn't quick to grab the white hand held out towards him. Seeing this, Eun seemed to pout then tickled Add's cheek with her tails.

Angered by this, Add now pulled back his Dynamos to trap Eun. But Eun didn't retract her tails and instead lowered her stance to look up at Add seductively. She waited for Add's decision.

"Well, have you decided?"

".....Why are you helping me?"

"I have the power to see into the future. Wouldn't that be enough?"

Eun substituted this as an explanation. She couldn't be helping for free; she must have calculations of her own.

But this was no situation to measure the consequences.

He had no business in this age without Eve.

"What should I do precisely?"

"First open an alternate space with the Dynamos. Then have them cause a time wave to create a time stream wormhole. I'll determine the time-space coordinates. Would the period where the entire ruckus started be fine for you?"

Add nodded without words and created a time stream wormhole just as Eun had requested. It was a 10 meter dark orb. One could look into it from the outside but could only see darkness within.

Add had arrived in this age by time travel, he obviously knew how the travel worked.

He just didn't have the technology that allowed him to choose the time he wanted to travel to. Add was extremely suspicious of Eun.... But he had no choice but to accept her offer.

With her eyes closed, Eun waved her shining hand multiple times in front of the time stream wormhole before she finally opened her eyes.

"Alright, it's finished. Go inside within 10 seconds from now."

Add didn't even nod as he stood in front of the wormhole.

'Second time travel huh....'

Add would be lying if he said he wasn't worried about being able to arrive in the correct time.....

Add clicked his tongue and looked at Elsword who was still lying down then moved his gaze towards Eve who had stopped functioning.

As he had thought, this age without Eve was worthless.

"Then save the girl this time. If possible....."

Turning his back towards Eun who gave off an oddly obsessive nuance, Add threw himself into the different timeline.

"What are you doing? Is that some sort of end-of-flight motion?"

Add blinked after hearing a cold voice stab his ears. The location was inside the castle. A mechanical doll landed lightly on the ground and was staring at Add with a blank expression.

Her serene golden eyes.

".....Eve?"

When she was called by her name, Eve tilted her head as if she didn't understand. It was cute to see the two gears floating beside her copy her motion and tilt as well.

"Is there something wrong...-"

Add immediately jumped off the Dynamos and brought his hands towards Eve's face. First check the Core on her forehead, then after confirming nothing was wrong he now stroked her cheeks.

This was the first time he had touched them so he couldn't tell anything except how soft they were.

If Add had touched them beforehand he could have figured out the difference.

"How...."

"Alright. There's no problem with the Core. Nothing seems to be wrong with cognitive circuits. I'd like to perform an internal examination next. So take off your clothes...."

"How rude!"

Slap! Add stuttered as he backed away after getting hit. Eve was shaking in anger.

"How dare you? Reflect on your actions!"

"Ow, owowow...."

Add's cheek felt like it was burning and it was no joke. But this pain delighted him.

Since it helped him confirm that this situation right now wasn't a dream.

Eve's Core getting destroyed earlier was real too. But this situation right now was real as well. As the disturbance team's leader, Add was about to move into action together with Eve.

That's right, Eve was currently safe.

Eve openly expressed her displeasure as she stroked her own cheeks Add had touched before. She looked extremely angry.

"It was a mistake for me to trust you even slightly. I'll remember this."

"...Wait."

It looked like things might get out of control. Add made some fake coughs and got up from his spot.

He had acted on impulse after seeing Eve, now he had to recover from this situation.

"Kukukuk, it was a simple mistake. Forget it."

Eve didn't answer and glared at Add with a furious expression. Anyone would get angry if someone suddenly approached them and

stroked their face.

"I thought you didn't have emotions. Why are you getting angry over something like this?"

"I'm not angry. It's obvious to chastise someone for being rude."

Add had said it to relieve this foul mood but for some reason it looked like it made Eve even angrier.

After realizing Eve was seriously angry Add pondered repeatedly to himself.

Didn't Elsword also make Eve angry lots of times? Just how did he relieve Eve of her anger?

....He couldn't figure out how. But he didn't care about Elsword. Actually, even Eve's feelings (although she claims she doesn't have any) being hurt wasn't important right now.

"This is not the time for this. I'll explain about what happened in later time. Listen to me carefully for now. We have to get out of this castle."

The most important thing right now was to get Eve to a safe location. He didn't ever want to see what happened earlier again.

"I'll have to refuse."

"What?"

"....Just what are you thinking? What about the promise with Rena?"

Eve's expression now seemed to be beyond anger. She was just dumbfounded. Add was trying to move Eve to a safe place since he knew of the events that will take place.... But Eve didn't know anything.

"Kugh..."

Only Add knew of the future events since he had time traveled. No matter how he tried to coax Eve it would be impossible for him to

convince her to escape with him from this chaotic castle.

Since it meant abandoning Rena..... and Elsword.

"....."

Should he abduct her using force? Add momentarily thought about this but Eve was now largely wary of him because of the contact just earlier.

And she wouldn't believe him if he told her how he knew what will happen soon.

"Two of you, is there something wrong?"

Ara who had been defeating the soldiers came running with a spear in her hand. Add was startled when he saw Ara's white hair but Ara stared back at the two of them with an innocent expression.

It was Ara, not Eun.

"It's nothing. Let's hurry. It would be easier for Rena to move if we cause the disturbance further away from the main castle."

"Yes! I'll lead the way!"

Two girls finished their discussion and was about to move but stopped. Eve sternly and Ara worriedly stared at Add.

"Mr.Add? Is there something wrong?"

".....My head was aching a bit that's all"

He couldn't get Eve out of this situation. And Add also wasn't keen on making the choice of abandoning Rena and running away by themselves.

"Kukuk, I'll wipe the floor with them!!"

"Yes! Seeing Mr.Add laugh makes me happy too!"

Ara smiled brightly without understanding anything. Eve looked at the two with a pitiable expression then moved frontwards towards where the soldiers were.

"..."

Add didn't like how Eve was calmly charging towards the soldiers but he couldn't do anything about it.

Add would have liked to wrap Eve up in a bag and kidnap her if he could. But the circumstances didn't allow him to do so.

'It's okay. I just need to look out for that one.'

Wally Robot. Everything will be fine if he just destroyed that.

As expected the soldiers weren't a match for the disturbance team. Add took a deep breath as he tensed up after arriving in the garden.

"Be careful from now on."

"Huh? Oh, okay."

Ara nodded without understand what Add meant after seeing Add become so serious in front of just mere 20 soldiers. Eve looked at Add confusedly as well. But there was no time to explain.

-Operational.

Terrifying mechanical noise Add heard from before was heard again. Soldiers just like before started to scatter screaming as the heavy footsteps rang across the garden,

That unrefined junk like appearance. Wally Robot No.44 made its appearance.

"That's...."

"There's no retreat. I'll finish it off."

Add cut off Eve who was about to make a surprised voice. Even if they were to retreat right now Eve would refuse to leave the castle entirely.

Then it was better to focus on and destroy that thing.

"Ara, don't rush in carelessly. That thing uses ranged attacks with its fists."

"Huh? How did you know?"

Ara was about to charge in but stopped and responded in surprise. Add spoke sharply.

"There's no time to explain. I'm planning to use the strongest skill I have to destroy that thing so you guys quietly follow my instructions."

"....."

Putting Ara aside, Add had expected Eve to refuse but Eve stared at Add quietly for a moment before unexpectedly nodding.

"I'll leave you in charge of instructions."

"I'm not too sure but I'll do my best too!"

"....Kukukuk, great!"

Even as he laughed Add didn't let down his guard. Wally Robot was approaching them. Enemy the three of them struggled heavily against before.

"We must destroy that thing thoroughly as possible. If it doesn't get destroyed by my skill, then Ara you charge in and finish it. Eve, you protect us from long range."

"....Protect? Understood."

"I'll do my best too!"

"Let's start in count of three."

Clank. Clank. Wally Robot was approaching. Under normal circumstances, Add's lust for knowledge on how such a thing could have been created with such subpar technology would have taken better of him. But not right now.

That thing destroyed Eve earlier.

Then this time he'll destroy it instead.

".....Three! Everyone scatter!!"

Following Add's instruction, Eve and Ara separated left and right. Wally Robot stopped its advance for a slight moment. Using that chance Add instantly increased the output of the Dynamos to their maximum capacity.

Purple space opened up above the Wally Robot's head.

"You won't be able to ignore this!"

This was a skill Add had intended to hide until the final moment. But not anymore. He didn't ever want to see that scene again.

-.....!

Wally Robot must have also sensed something was off and tried to move but.... Add's shout was much faster.

"Stardust Shower!!"

Barrages of gravity orbs rained down from the gate above Wally Robot's head. Each of the orbs was a collection of energy compressed to such extent that they could be seen with the naked eye.

Boom! Boom!

Getting bombarded by abnormal rain of gravity, Wally Robot wasn't able to retaliate as it started to break down. Wally Robot was able to block the space interference abilities..... But in the end it was only able to block direct interferences. It had no answer to bringing something from another space and attacking with it.

Just like how it couldn't do a thing against Eve's Junk Break!

Crash!

Add closed the space after the last gravity orb had fallen. This skill was his trump card and maintaining it up till now was his limit.

"Huff, huff....."

Sweat dripped down from Add like rain. But despite being hit by Add's trump card skill, Wally Robot lost only one arm and a leg and

some of its main body parts.

It was still functioning!

"Finish it Ara!!"

But this was also within Add's calculations. It was an enemy three of them struggled hard against; Add had never thought it would just end with one Stardust Shower.

"Falling Dragon!!"

Ara moved in position with her fists clenched tightly and struck the ground. The ground seemed to shake as Wally Robot's remaining leg also broke. Wally Robot fell down.

But Wally Robot was still functioning.

'Not enough....'

Unexpectedly, Ara's burst damage wasn't enough! Come to think of it, Ara was a type that attacked agilely weaving through multiple enemies. She had never displayed burst of explosive damage. As Add was about to go into his next attack soon as possible,

"Here I go!"

Eve despite getting no instructions from Add jumped in front of the Wally Robot. The scene from before flash by Add's mind again. Add screamed instinctively.

"Eveeeeeeeeeee!!"

"Junk Break!!"

Add's blood soaked scream was drowned by the sound of the shredder Eve called upon. Wally Robot couldn't withstand the terrifying force of the shredder's rotation and shook violently. Then it fell over backwards and exploded.

It didn't look like it was moving anymore.

".....Is it over?"

Unable to ease his heart, Add approached on his Dynamos to

examine the Wally Robot. Only a single arm remained of the Wally Robot. It was a dull ending compared to the struggle they had before

Actually, the struggle from before was also because they were too startled by the sudden appearance of an enemy and couldn't coordinate properly. They were able to win relatively easily this time with Add making up his mind to use his secret skill then Ara and Eve also following suit and pouring in their powerful skills as well.

".....Phew."

Eve wiped her forehead and took a deep breath after recalling the shredders.

"It sounded like someone shouted my name loudly. Am I correct?"

"Mr.Add did."

Eve quietly stared at Add after hearing Ara's tattling(?). After finally being able to relax, Add let out a maniacal laugh as if he didn't hear anything.

"Kukukuk, Great. This is perfect!"

"So did you call me?"

"He called you very desperately."

Someone shut Ara's mouth. Eve continued to stare at Add silently then slightly lowered her head.

"I'm sorry. I moved without your instructions. I almost ruined your plan."

"....."

For him to hear an apology from Eve... Add was surprised and didn't know what to do for a

moment then muttered.

"Kukuk, the result is everything. It's fine since we won."

"It was an extremely powerful foe. I'm glad no one was hurt!"

"Yes, really."

There were still soldiers surrounding them but no one paid attention to them. They could be cleaned up with ease.

"Flame Geyser!!"

A flame seemed to rise up as the soldiers flew off screaming.

"Is everyone safe? I came to help!!"

Elsword approached them with a loud shout. Ara hopped bunch of times as she waved to Elsword.

Eve didn't say anything but seemed like she was welcoming him and Add was.....

"...Tch."

Add turned his head trying to ignore Elsword. Before, well it would technically be incorrect to say

'before' but anyways, Add recalled how he had expressed murderous intent towards Elsword.

Back then he had really planned to kill him.... But since Eve was safe now there was no reason to.

"Why are you here? What about Rena?"

"We heard a large noise so she let me go. Are you guys okay?"

Add didn't like seeing Elsword talk with Eve like this. But Eve will become his before long anyways.

He'll let it slide for now.....

"A powerful enemy appeared but we were able to win easily due to Add's plan."

"I see. As expected, big brother Add's reliable."

"...."

Add was at a loss for words but Elsword was honestly staring at him with admiration. ...Since Elsword was still a kid wouldn't his

feelings have been hurt when Add openly expressed his reluctance towards Elsword all this time?

Elsword from this timeline obviously didn't know.... But Add had even tried to kill him before.

Add couldn't help but to feel uncomfortable. But Elsword looked like he didn't mind anything that happened in the past. Actually, Elsword.... Despite Add's various mocking, only got riled up during the moment; he never showed any lingering signs of grudge after that.

It was a mentality Add couldn't comprehend no matter how much he pondered. But....

"Hey, Elsword."

"Hm? Why big brother Add?"

" ..."

Since when did Elsword start using the 'big brother' honorific whenever he called him? Add scratched his face then turned his head around abruptly.

"I'm....sorry about before."

"Before? But I was with Rena."

Elsword didn't look like he understood what Add was talking about. Ara and Eve also couldn't understand as well. But Add had just wanted to say it.

Since there was no way for him to apologize to Elsword from the timeline where Eve was destroyed, he was just saying it now.

"Then let's all...."

Ara was speaking then she abruptly shut her mouth. Not only Ara but everyone's gaze was focused behind Add's back.

Add's heart sank all of a sudden. What was it? Why was everyone making such a terrified expression?

"Darkness..... Ruin..... Death!!"

The voice that sounded like it could have only come from depths of hell. As chill went down his spine, Add turned around to see a thing that was essentially a giant shadow itself.

And the wavy gate behind that thing was clearly a..... Dimension Gate.

"Demons! Everyone be careful!!"

Along with Ara's scream filled warning, tens of demons appeared out of the gate!!

"W, what?!!"

Dimension Gate opening without any notice at all and Demons appearing out of it?! Add stood horrified but Ara charged towards demons without hesitation.

"I will never let you pass!"

"That idiot!!"

Three of them had exhausted themselves by fighting Wally Robot. And you could tell with a single glance that each of these demons were formidable.

"Elsword, stay close to me!"

But Eve also didn't show any signs of retreating; instead she was summoning her Nasod blades and swinging it at the demons. Of course.... It might be different if Eve was by herself but Elsword was besides her right now, there was no way she'd retreat.

"Void Impact!!"

Add also instinctively ripped the demons apart with an alternate space attack. He had a feeling that the situation had gone gravely wrong but it was too late to turn back.

Just how? Dimension Gate wasn't a thing that could open easily like this. Not only that, it wasn't just one or two demons but

hundreds that appeared out of the gate!!

Add busily moved his Dynamos while still frightened. Right now Add had his hands full worrying about his own life.

These demons seemed to all have a designated role. Some of them attacked close up with fists, some attacked by launching a spear, others tackled with their bodies and very few of them shot beams from far away.

This demon group's coordinated movements were reminiscent of a trained military; and their commander was..... The giant demon that appeared first!

Add glared at the demon, the Shadow Master, but there was nothing he could do at the moment.

Add was already too occupied with just dodging and his attacks weren't even working properly against the minion demons. He didn't want to admit it..... But even if Add was at full power it would be difficult for him to handle even ten of them at once.

They were incomparable to the castle's soldiers. They'll lose if this keeps up.

"Kugh!"

"Ahhhh!"

The situation was same with Eve and Ara. Never mind facing the Shadow Master, barely managing to hold out against the minions was the limitation of the El Search Party without Rena. No, even if Rena was here it would be difficult to ensure everyone's safety.

Elsword who had the least amount skill was already drenched in blood and barely hanging on to his life. They had to somehow run away.... But they were already surrounded by the demons from all sides.

Add alone could somehow get away using his flight, but he couldn't spare any moment to save Eve across the garden.

"Kugh...."

What should I do?! When the cornered Add was desperately trying to think of a way out of this situation, the Shadow Master suddenly swung its arm. Multiple dark orbs appeared on the ground.

"Explode, Darkfire Orbs!"

"Watch out!"

Add warned everyone as he instinctively activated the dimension distortion mode. He could mitigate relative amount of physical shock with this.

Booom! Booom!

While hearing the terrifying sound of explosions in sequence.... Add saw clearly with his two eyes.

As the Darkfire Orbs exploded covering everything with an explosion,

Eve was covering Elsword.

".....Ah."

The explosions stopped as Add let out a voice. Add cancelled the dimension distortion mode without any second thoughts. Strangely, the demons didn't attack Add.

"E....ve?"

Eve was once again fallen on the ground.

"Ahahahaha, Hahahahaha!! Everyone..... Retreat!!"

Shadow Master let out a laugh of satisfaction then disappeared through the Dimension Gate along with its minions. The area became quiet.... As if tens of demons attacking them just now was a lie.

Amidst the silence where nothing else moved, Add plodded towards Eve. He couldn't suppress his beating heart, he wanted to run over and check right away....but at the same time he was afraid

of figuring out.

"Eve....."

Covered in wounds, Add groaned as he approached and saw the scene.

Eve with her eyes closed.

Nasod Core covered in uncountable amount of cracks.

Ceased to function, death confirmed. Should he also write down that the cause of death was destruction of the Core due to excessive external shock?

".....Ah."

One thing that was different from last time was that, this time Elsword also lay besides Eve. Add suppressed his feelings that were about to explode looking down at the boy covered in blood.

Again trying to save Elsword.....Eve was!

If even Elsword ended up like this then just where was he supposed to exhaust this rage that was about to drive him crazy?! Only thing Add could do was to roll his hands into tight fists and shake in rage. His heart felt like it was going to explode. Yet he didn't know where to vomit this feeling out to.

"Well, what are you going to do now?"

Hearing a cold voice coming from behind, Add froze on spot for a moment. Add slowly turned around. White hair and fox ears, Eun was staring at him chillingly.

"Boy, what are you going to do now?"

".....You."

Add managed to suppress his emotions that were on the verge of exploding. Maybe it was because he saw Eve end up like this once before, Add was able to maintain his sanity better than before.

Also accurate time travel was impossible without Eun. He needed

her cooperation.

"Assist me...."

"Of course I'll assist the boy. But how should I help?"

"...."

Even if they defeated the Wally Robot, there was absolutely no way to protect Eve if demons ambushed them all of a sudden like this. They were completely outmatched.

But Add had no need for a timeline without Eve.

"Isn't that obvious.....?! I'll time travel once more!!"

That's why I'll go back again!!

When Add came to Rena was in front of him.

"Do you have something to say to me?"

"...How did I appear? What date is it today? Where is this place?"

Add looked around. Elder, it was the 1st floor of the inn El Search Party stayed in. Only person around was Rena, there was nobody else.

"You appeared all of a sudden riding on that. Could you refrain from using that indoors? Other people could get startled."

"...."

Add realized that he was in low flight on his Dynamos. Which was obvious... while traveling through time stream wormhole he needed the Dynamo's dimension distortion mode to ensure his own safety.

While Dynamos had extremely numerous features, its main feature was time travel. Features like battle, flight, scan, camouflage were merely expansions.

'...I see. So that's how they perceive me appearing.'

It seems for other people, Add emerging from time travel looked like he was appearing all of a sudden on his Dynamos. Writing this

fact in his mind, Add got off the Dynamo and sat across from Rena as he looked around cautiously.

Rena stared at the overly cautious Add and smiled.

"Is there something you're worried about? You don't look too well."

"That's...."

It looked like the time travel was successful. Soon as Add deduced this much, he realized what was about to happen in this timeline.

Hoffman will arrive soon. Then following his request, El Search Party will go through the Underground Waterway so they could infiltrate into the Wally's Castle.

Then Eve's Core will be destroyed and she will cease to function.

"...."

Even if Wally Robot was destroyed he couldn't withstand the demons. Even if Rena was there it would still be difficult to ensure Eve's safety.

Then how can Add avoid the result of Eve getting destroyed? Rena called out softly as Add struggled in his thoughts.

"Add, if you're troubled about something can you believe in this big sis and talk to me about it?"

"I'm not particularly troubled."

Add replied bluntly then quickly continued to calculate. The solution was simple. Eve can never be allowed to go to the Wally's Castle.

If Eve goes there she will certainly be destroyed.

Trying to protect Eve in that situation? Add's power alone wasn't enough. He couldn't even do a thing and was forced to watch demons destroy Eve in front of his eyes. And Add wasn't confident he'd be able to protect Eve even if he re-tried.

Wally Robot No.44, Shadow Master and its minions.

They weren't enemies El Search Party in their current state could handle at the same time.

That was the reason why Add had to evacuate Eve no matter what.... But how? This was the issue.

Eve wasn't too fond of Add and trying to restrain her by force won't be easy.

And other members who don't know the situation will no doubt take Eve's side.....

".....Hoffman will come here soon."

"Hm? Mr.Hoffman will?"

There was only one way. Add opened his eyes slightly and stared at Rena.

"I'm going to guess what that man will say to us. In exchange.... If I guess correctly, after he finishes telling us his story, accept one of my requests without any questions, objections and absolutely."

"Alright, I'll do that. So what will Mr.Hoffman say?"

Rena smiled leisurely as she nodded. Add hesitated because she had agreed so easily. But Add had already asked, might as well go with it.

He needed Rena's help with this.

Soon as Add had finished speaking to Rena, Hoffman arrived and begged them to rescue the town's captive girls. El Search Party agreed just like last time. Only difference was that they made their decision faster since Add didn't try to persuade the girls out of it.

Boy's room balcony after Hoffman had left.

Add stood on the balcony staring at the night sky. Stars were shining beautifully but it didn't make him feel any better.

"Hm, that was quite surprising."

And on that balcony a beautiful woman sat with her hips leaning

on top of the railing. She could fall plummeting to the ground if she was to mistakenly lose her balance. Despite this the woman smiled as usual.

"It was just like Add said. Mr.Hoffman made a request to us. What's going on?"

"I told you not to ask questions or object. Listening to my request is everything."

The way Add said it made it seem more like a demand than a request. But there was no sign of discontent in Rena's face. Rather, Add was more startled by his own tone.

"...I wasn't trying to say it like that."

"No, it's fine. Since it looks like you have a good reason why you can't tell me. I'll listen to your request if it's something I can do. So what do you want me to do?"

"Leave Eve and me out for tomorrow."

Because Rena stared at Add blankly he elaborated.

"Only three of you go infiltrate the Wally's Castle through Underground Waterway."

"Hmm...."

Rena showed a troubled expression. It was given..... Add and Eve had the role of the waist of the El Search Party.

They both had excellent battle and situation assessment capabilities. For the El Search Party, losing not only one but two of them meant that the party's total power would be cut in half, no, become lower than half.

As Rena pondered Add clenched his fists.

그리고 발코니 난간 위에 아름다운 여성이
성령이를 걸치고 앉아 있었다.



"And on that balcony a beautiful woman sat with her hips leaning on top of the railing."

"I will make sure something like this never happens again. Just this once.... let us not participate."

"Okay, I got it."

Add was quite surprised at Rena's another easy consent. Add had assumed before that Rena saying she'd listen to his request without hearing the clear details was because she was too soft.... But he didn't expect her to consent so easily after actually hearing this unreasonable request about how two of them will not go tomorrow.

"...Will that really be alright?"

Rena smiled brightly when Add who had made the request asked for confirmation.

"Since Add wants to confess to Eve, of course I'll help. Don't worry; I'll convince Eve to stay behind."

"..."

That was completely off the mark but it didn't matter if she interpreted it that way. What was important right now was not to send Eve to Wally's Castle.

"Hm, I was just joking, did that make you mad?"

Unexpectedly, Rena became flustered and asked worriedly. When Add quietly shook his head, Rena made a soft smile.

"You don't have to tell me why. It looks certain that Add is trying to do something for Eve's sake."

".....It's not something lame like a confession."

"Yea, I was just joking."

Rena made a troubled smile as she denied her previous words.

"I know Add wouldn't request so forcefully like this if it wasn't

something really serious. And I can also see that you're feeling sorry about it too."

Eve would listen if Rena was the one that asked her. She wouldn't go to the Wally's Castle and remain here with Add.

"Ah, I'm sorry. Forcefully wasn't the correct word to use. I don't know what your situation is but....

Hmm, how should I say this?"

Rena took off the hands she had on the railing and folded her arms to think.

Her pose right now looked really dangerous. Her glamorously large breasts got emphasized even more but it didn't look like she cared too much.

"Hmm, Since Add is trying his best I want to cheer you on. Would that be a good explanation?"

Add didn't know how to answer. What should he call this emotion where deep part of his heart tickled and his face was turning red?

"Eve is a good kid. Everything will work out if you're honest with her."

"I told you it's not like that."

Add's voice became sharper but Rena's smile didn't falter.

"Even if it's not I'm saying it now. You want be in a good relationship with Eve right?"

"I'm not interested in such things. I'm...."

Add wasn't someone from this age. He was merely a wanderer of time with a 'Time he must return to'.

Only reason he remained in this timeline was because he encountered Eve, a clue that will allow him to time travel accurately. He didn't have any other desires beyond that.

If it was some other member that got done in inside the Wally's

Castle instead of Eve..... Add wouldn't have resorted to time travel trying to change the result.

"Still, I think Eve wants to get along well with Add too."

"Nonsense....."

Eve only looked at Elsword. No, actually Eve had rather good relations with the other members as well. Only her relationship with Add was cold.

And to be honest Add was always looking for a chance to take Eve's Core so he didn't have much desire to improve his relationship with the other members.

"Wouldn't it be stranger for us to get along given such a short time we've known each other?"

"Hmm, I don't think time matters too much. I think what's more important is how compatible you are? And..."

Rena's voice suddenly sounded nostalgic.

"For some reason everyone don't feel like strangers to me."

".....You're just mistaken."

Add didn't feel too great answering so crookedly. But Rena unexpectedly nodded in agreement to Add's remark then stared at him directly.

"This big sis will cheer Add on for whatever he wants to do. But before that you have to promise me one thing. Never..."

"Do something that will make her cry. I'll try to do that at least for tomorrow. Will that be fine?"

Rena was surprised for a moment because she was cut off by Add but smiled brightly.

"Yes, that'll be fine. You two better get along while we're gone."

"I can't be too sure about that."

"It's a rare chance where two of you get to spend time together

with each other. Be courageous."

"I told you it's not like that...."

Add muttered but Rena smiled as if she didn't hear. Geez, just what kind of misunderstanding does she have?

Anyways, with this he could remain in Elder with Eve. After achieving his goal, Add suddenly remembered something and told Rena.

"Tomorrow, don't get angry in the Underground Waterway."

"Hm? What are you saying all of a sudden?"

"I'll try to get along with Eve much as possible so don't get angry in the Underground Waterway."

Add had recalled Rena getting terrifyingly angry at Banthus gloating about his Nasod Arm. Add was taking measures against it a day before it happened.

Rena didn't know anything but nodded.

"Okay, got it. I promise not to get angry."

"Go back now if you don't have anything more to talk about."

"You're not going to say goodnight to me?"

A request for a goodnight kiss. Add frowned when Rena stared at him with a merry grin.

"I'm not a kid."

"Yea, sorry. You were acting so cute that I felt like teasing you."

Rena apologized easily but was still grinning as if she was having fun. Since she didn't know what was going on, she must have misunderstood Add's request as Add's attempt to improve his relationship with Eve.

Probably something like how Add who was always keeping himself in the outskirts of the group was now openly trying to

improve his relationship with the other members?

Seeing Rena like this, Add spoke without realizing it himself.

"Run away if things get dangerous."

"Hm?"

"...Since there's only three of you."

Rena smiled and nodded.

"Yes I will. So don't worry about us too much. Don't fight with each other while we're gone.

Remember to eat well. Also be compromising with each other. If you guys do something wrong to each other apologize honestly. And also...."

"Stop with the nagging and go back already. How long are you going to stay in a guy's room this late at night?"

Rena made a 'pfft' sound and laughed.

"Then please take good care of Eve until we come back."

With those final words Rena tilted her body backwards. Add was shocked when Rena suddenly fell down. He looked down the balcony but Rena was already skillfully grabbing the bottom floor's railings and going into the girl's room.

It was a performance that took advantage of the fact that the girl's room was located right below the boy's room. Rena had pulled it off easily but Add who was watching thought Rena was going to fall and his heart almost stopped.

"Just what was I....."

Add shook his head violently. Did Rena's soft personality rub off on him too?

Right now Add was trying to send the members other than Eve and himself into the pit of death.

There was a powerful enemy called Wally Robot inside the Wally's

Castle. Demons will also come out of the Dimension Gate again. Going there was extremely dangerous no matter how skilled Rena was.

But Add couldn't explain this to them.... If he wanted to explain it he'd have to first reveal his ability to time travel. Then to convince Eve not to go to the Wally's Castle, Add had to mention how Eve was destroyed.

They wouldn't believe it anyways.

"....It would also be a problem if they believed."

For Add, the El Search Party members were merely people he got involved with by coincidence. To say it roughly, except for Eve they were all people he didn't care about.

Since they would only get in the way of Add trying to steal Eve's Nasod Core later, this was a good opportunity to cut down the number of obstacles. It was an indirect murder. Shouldn't this be a good thing for him?

It was correct for him to think this way....

"Tch."

But for some reason it felt really disgusting. Add muttered as he looked up at the night sky.

"Well that strange thing Eun is going too.... They should be fine."

If Rena and Eun were together they'd at least be able to escape without too much difficulty. Also the movements of the demons were strange as well.

"...Why did they leave after only destroying Eve?"

Was there a limit to how long the Dimension Gate could stay open? The entire notion of hundreds of demons appearing without any previous notice or preparation was absurd. So the time limit theory did quite make sense.

"Tch."

Anyways, why was he thinking about what will happen to the group going into the Wally's Castle?

Add threw down a light punch on the railing getting annoyed at himself.

He could somewhat get a hold of himself when he felt his hands become numb from pain.

"Let's sleep."

Add's internal clock was messed up because he had to time travel twice. But right now he had to force himself to sleep. He had to stay besides Eve for an entire day tomorrow.

Let's pray that the events that happened in front of my eyes from before don't show up in my dreams.

There was nobody else in the room when Add opened his eyes. Only a rumpled blanket remained in the place where Elsword was sleeping.

The sun was up high already. It was noon.

"Hungry..."

Add blankly murmured. Then a thought went across Add's head and he kicked off his blanket and got up immediately.

That's right, Eve! Did Eve listen to Rena and remain in Elder?

Feeling impatient, Add rushed out of the room and hurried to the floor below. He forcefully opened the door without knocking despite it being the girl's room.

"Eve!!"

"...."

Eve's eyes widened as she stared at Add who just rushed in as if he'd destroy the door.

Good! She's here! Add cheered internally and was finally able to ease his mind..... But for some reason Eve's face started to turn red.

Overheating? Decreased functionality? Add who was now able to calm down activated his scholarly curiosity.... Then he realized that for some reason Eve was showing more skin than usual.

She wasn't even wearing underwear.

I see. So Nasods these days are quite immoral. Nasods back in the day weren't like this.

Kids these days.....

Add shook his head in disappointment at this deplorable reality without realizing it himself. That's right; Ancient Nasods from back in the day had grace and dignity.

It seemed while Eve had superior features, she wasn't too interested in dignity.

"How, How...."

"If it's about etiquette I can teach you. Try to at least wear underwear next time."

A gear blustered towards Add as he spoke arrogantly.

"How rude!!"

It finally felt like the multiple gear strikes had stopped. But unexpectedly a palm slapped across Add's cheek. It was shockingly painful.

Slam!!

The door closed in front of Add as he fell from the shock. Sitting in the corridor, Add stroked his burning cheek as he finally came to his senses.

".....How dare you... you're just an immoral Nasod-"

-.....

Gear that just helped with Eve's attack was floating in front of him. The gear seemed to reflect Eve's emotion as it looked very hostile.

"Who do you think you are getting angry in front of me?"

Add grabbed the both sides of the gear with his hands and pulled outwards. Gear was surprised by Add's sudden attack and struggled to get free. But Add was feeling petulant and didn't let go.

Bam!

Add was teasing the gear when the door opened again. This time Eve was wearing clothes.

"Don't bully Reby."

"I was just playing with....."

Add was about to protest but stopped and let his hands go. He became speechless at how Eve's attire was different from usual. Elegant beauty flowed from her black uniform that looked like a military uniform.

It suited the expressionless Eve really well.

"These are clothes that Rena prepared. Is something wrong?"

"...It's nothing."

He couldn't tell her that he lost his mind staring. Eve sent Add an extremely cold stare when Add tried to gloss it over and stand up.

"Don't you have something to say to me?"

"....."

Could it be that she wants Add to acknowledge the change in her attire? Honestly, Add never have been interested in girl's attires before.

He had never tried complimenting a girl for their appearance.



"Well, it doesn't look bad on you. Better than expected."

"...."

Eve's stare became extremely colder.

"I deny useless things like emotions but I think people should at least have courtesy. You're the lowest."

"What are you talking about all of a sudden?"

"Forget it. I wouldn't have remained with you if Rena didn't ask."

Eve was walking away with a very upset expression. Add obviously couldn't let her go alone so he followed.

Come to think of it, what did Rena say to get Eve to stay behind in Elder?

Eve clearly expressed her desire to save the captive girls last night.

"Rena said I should hear the exact details from you Eve. What should we do now in Elder?"

"Patrol. Follow me."

Eve spoke as if she really didn't want to answer. It seemed she was quite upset but Add didn't mind.

Eve not being fond of him wasn't anything new. It was given since only thing Add did to Eve so far was get on her nerves and mock her.

'So I'm probably just a rude and unpleasant human male to her.'

Add thought for the first time about how he would look in Eve's point of view. No matter how much he thought his first thought was the only answer he could come up with.

"Kukukuk...."

Add sneered. Well he wasn't thinking about getting on Eve's good side anyways. All he needed was Eve's Nasod Core, and the technology that comprised her body.

He'd be able to avoid the worst case scenario of Eve's Core getting

destroyed since Eve didn't go to the Wally's Castle. Knowing this eased Add's mind.

"Kukuk."

Eve didn't turn back despite how Add continued laughing.



무표정한 이브가 임으니 무척이나 어울린다.

"It suited the expressionless Eve really well."

Rena must have told Eve that there might be an emergency situation in Elder so Eve should stay behind.

Eve obediently followed Rena's instructions and was diligently patrolling the city for any unusual activities.

"Well...."

Add followed Eve leaving a slight distance between the two of them. The joy of managing to get Eve to stay in Elder was short lived. They have been patrolling for a while and it was getting boring.

Come to think of it. This was a rare chance for him to be alone with Eve. Wasn't it a good chance to satisfy his intellectual curiosity?

'....Or steal Eve's Nasod Core right now.'

Eve was walking in front of him and had her back wide open. Not only that, Add knew of Eve's secret move, Junk Break but Eve didn't know about Add's Stardust Shower.

Add and Eve were equals comparing only their battle capabilities. But Add had the advantage in positioning and information.

If he reached out, if he manipulated the Dynamos and attacked first.... He'd be able to come out victorious in the end.

Please take good care of Eve until we come back.

Add was about to open his fingers but winced. Why did he have to remember Rena's parting words right now?

"Tch...."

Something troubled Add's mind. Add made a fist with his hands with a sour taste in his mouth. This was the perfect chance and yet he didn't feel up to it now.

Eve looked back questionably when Add stopped walking and stood still.

"Let's go to the next area."

"Wait."

Add muttered as he sat down in front of the fountain.

"I remember now, humans were species that needed rest. I'll continue to patrol on my own if that's the case."

"I told you to wait."

Add manipulated his Dynamos and sent every one of them off flying in various directions. It was the wide area scouting function.

"This should do it. It will be able to cover this entire city so I'll be able to know if something happens."

"Why didn't you use that earlier?"

Eve blamed Add for not using this convenient feature earlier. But Add had a good reason for not using it earlier. This wide area scouting used all of his Dynamos and during that time Add's battle capabilities became zero. It was a doubled edged sword.

Hypothetically... if Eve were to attack Add right now he wouldn't be able to do anything and die right there.

Well it was only a hypothesis. Add wouldn't have used the wide area scouting if he didn't trust Eve.

The real reason Add got rid of all his Dynamos in the first place was.... to shake of the temptation of wanting to ambush Eve.

"I can't use it carelessly."

"I understand. Then I'll wait beside you."

Eve sat beside Add but seemed like she didn't want to sit on the ground directly. She sat on her gears instead and the gears transformed into a shape that allowed Eve to sit comfortably.

How pompous. Add thought to himself.... He recalled how Eve had proclaimed herself to be

Queen of Nasods before he time traveled.

Queen of Nasods, it was a splendid title which suited her well. Considering the technology involved in building her, it was a flawless title.

"I won't tell Ara Haan."

Only silence was between the two until Eve suddenly spoke out. Eve brought up a weird topic out of the blue while still looking at the people passing by. She wasn't looking at Add's direction.

"I'm not too knowledgeable about human male and female relationships but it would probably be bad if Ara Haan found about what happened before."

"?"

What does she mean? Add stared back dumbfounded. Eve's cheeks slightly got dyed in pink. Add wondered for a while what Eve meant. He then finally came up with one possible theory.

Could she be....embarrassed that she showed herself naked?

It would be an obvious reaction for humans but wasn't she a Nasod? Does she actually have an emotion called embarrassment? Add couldn't help but to be surprised and amazed at the same time.

"...Why do you mention Ara's name there?"

Add was still amazed but couldn't understand what Ara had to do with this.

"Because you two came back together yesterday when we were camping out."

"That doesn't have to do with anything."

"But I've learned that human male and female staying the night together meant sign of deep relationship."

"That's a simple misunderstanding. I was taking a stroll and saw Ara who was lost. That's why we came back together."

Add laid it out clearly. Eve stared for a bit then nodded slowly to

herself. She seemed quite surprised and was interjecting silently.

What should he call Eve's reaction right now....? Feelings of a girl chatting about someone else's love life?

As a guy Add couldn't understand no matter how much he thought. But he also wasn't too keen on getting mixed up with Ara and being misunderstood.

"Even I have a standard for girls. That overly clumsy one isn't my type at all. Kukuk"

"Then what type of girls do you like?"

Add hadn't expected Eve to ask this question so he couldn't answer immediately. Add had never perceived girls he met as member of the opposite sex so he actually didn't have any preferences.

"Girls are best when they are quiet and composed."

"Such old fashioned and gender discriminative taste. I see. So that's how human males are."

Eve spoke coldly. Add felt somewhat angry at having the answer he took quite a bit of consideration on denied like this.

"Is that so? Then how's our Queen of Nasod's taste in guys?"

"Nasods have no such thing. Love is just collision of unnecessary emotions."

"Isn't that just because you don't know how to measure guys? Well that explains why you're always looking at Elsword...."

"I don't understand why you'd bring up Elsword here."

Eve cut off the conversation with a straight face. Unlike her pompous responses from before, she was showing quite a bit of emotion now.

"Your reaction right now is why."

"Stop talking about things that don't make sense."

Eve must have realized that she was showing signs of disarray and returned her voice to the normal cold tone. Again.

Whenever Elsword was mentioned, the emotions Eve denied herself come to the surface.

"Kukuk, Are you sure you aren't just pretending not to understand? Elsword is the only thing you can see after all."

"That's not true."

"It's true. Geez, getting your heart stolen by just a single word 'I'll be your friend'"

Eve's eyes widened. From her response Add recalled that this information was the one he heard from Eve when they went to the Wally's Castle.

It wasn't an information Add should have known.

"How do you know.....?"

"Elsword told me while we were talking. That you're an idiot that got fooled over just one word saying he'll be your friend. That he can manipulate you very easily now....."

Slap!

Eve ruthlessly slapped Add's face.

"...Such rudeness."

Add had already known from previous experience that Eve would react this way if he insulted Eve's part about 'Friends'. He could prepare himself this time and managed to avoid falling from the hit because he knew already.

Add purposely showed his cheek that was now burning and let out a laugh.

"Kukukuk, is that it? It doesn't hurt at all."

"I don't understand what you mean. You're lying. Elsword is not a person that'd say such things."

"Yes, you're right. That's a sound conclusion. Yes, you getting angry like this. This is how it should be."

Add admitted wholeheartedly and stood up. Something swelled up within him and he couldn't stand it anymore.

"You're right. Elsword is not a person who would say such things. I'm always the liar! You always look at that him! And I always have to look at you like that....And I!"

Have to look at you getting destroyed. Despite all of this I traveled to this timeline to stop such a thing from happening again!!Add barely managed to swallow these words that were about to impulsively pop out of his mouth.

It was useless no matter how much he talked to her.

Events from back then had already ceased to exist. Like a daydream, Eve won't be able to understand no matter how hard Add explained to her. About how he held her in his arms as they went down on the Dynamo together.

About how when she left his arms and he had instinctively tried to grab her.

About how she was destroyed covering for Elsword. And how Add had become enraged and tried to destroy Elsword.

About how he pulled out everything he had to successfully destroy the Wally Robot, but couldn't protect Eve from the demons that appeared after....

And about how he was forced to watch Eve try to cover for Elsword up till the final moment again.

Such bitter feelings of helplessness and rage. Eve won't ever be able to understand it.

Add shut his mouth. He felt calmer now after spitting out the emotions that swelled up within him.

"I'll go for a round by myself."

Add put on his hood and left the fountain without looking back to see the face Eve was making.

He didn't want to see.

Going for a round was just an excuse to get out of there. Add was really walking aimlessly.

Elder's streets were that of a normal city if you left out the fact that you couldn't see any young girls.

Add arrived at the city entrance and suddenly recalled the country folk reaction of the El Search Party that had just arrived in Elder. Everyone was so busy looking around the bustling city back then.

"This is my first time seeing a street like this! Splendid!"

"Buying two apple juices is cheaper!!"

"You can't because I want to drink lemonade. Lemonade is also cheaper if you buy two."

"Add, keep an eye on the kids for me so they don't get lost okay?"

"Kukuk...."

It hasn't even been couple days yet it felt like such a long time ago. Well, back then they couldn't even have imagined such a powerful enemy was waiting for them in the Wally's Castle, or that Eve was going to be destroyed.

Back then everyone was laughing and talking.

Honestly... It was the same for Add. Enemies in front of him were only small fries and he was only looking for the chance to steal Eve's Nasod Core.

Add had never imagined he would be traveling through time to prevent Eve from getting destroyed.

".....Sigh."

Recalling the memories from back then, Add rubbed his palm on his cheek. Place where Eve hit him earlier was still burning.

"Tch, it hurts no matter how many times you get hit....."

Add spat out a sullen remark but he was slightly reflecting on his actions.

Add had already experienced firsthand that Eve would become enraged if he touched upon her relationship with Elsword, upon their friendship. Yet Add made the same mistake again.

"Just what am I doing?"

Add muttered and let out a big sigh. Getting caught up in the past and bursting out his emotions, it wasn't smart at all.

By preventing Eve from going to the Wally's Castle Add was able to avoid Eve's destruction. He was now all alone with Eve. He should have been using this chance to get on Eve's favorable side to gain advantage for his future plans. Yet he ended up ruining their relationship instead.

"Kukukuk, fine."

Add brought back all the Dynamos he scattered across the city and got on top of them. As Add rushed in low flight he let out a slight smile.

"Lemonade huh...."

Strong wind flipped Add's hood back. Add's face became revealed showing the pleasant smile he was making.

Add headed back directly to the fountain after going to the same store as before and buying a lemonade. Eve was still waiting sitting gently in the same spot.

"Kukukuk."

Add jumped down from the Dynamo after stopping the flight in front of her. Eve was sending him a chilly stare but he wasn't afraid.

"Here, drink."

"....."

Eve turned her head away abruptly when Add held out the lemonade. But Add didn't miss the slight hesitation she made before she reacted that way.

"Don't you like it? Lemonade?"

"I don't particularly like it. Nasods don't really need to eat or drink."

"Then it won't be a problem if I threw this away right?"

Add tilted the juice cup slightly. Cup shook as if the contents would drop to the ground at any moment. Eve who was prudently looking sideways became extremely surprised all of a sudden.

"...Wasting food is a grave crime."

"I really don't like lemonades. Kukukuk. If you won't drink I have no choice but to throw it away."

Eve pondered for a moment then reached out her hand. Add let her take it without saying anything and sat beside her again.

Eve quietly sipped on the lemonade. Even if she didn't say it you could tell that her mood had lightened up significantly.

"What I said before was a lie. I'm sorry if that offended you."

"I don't have any emotions, so I wasn't offended or anything."

"Yes, that's same as before."

Eve had accepted his apology like this before too. Add let out a short laugh and Eve who was still drinking made a confused expression.

"This is my first time drinking lemonade from here and it's really sweet."

"Didn't you drink it with Elsword on the day we arrived?"

"There was no such event."

Was she pretending not to have emotions again? Add laughed and stared..... But Eve was sending him a look that said she really didn't

recall such an event happening.

A chill went down Add's spine.

Eve.... Really haven't drunk juice together with Elsword on the day they arrived in Elder. Little squabble where Elsword and Eve fought over which drink to get never happened.

The past had changed.

And there was only one likely suspect for this. Add clenched his hand on top of the fountain tightly into a fist as the dry sweat dripped down his back.

'Calm down.... Don't get worked up.'

But his heart was beating as if they'd explode. According to Add's memories this was his 3rd time travel.

The first time travel was the one where he arrived in this timeline from the past.

Second time travel was done after Eve was destroyed by the Wally Robot.

And this was the third time travel that he did in order to prevent Eve from going to the Wally's Castle.

Only things that was likely to have changed the past was 2nd and 3rd time travels..... But he couldn't readily accept this. According to Add's Time Wave Theory, time was like calm surface of a lake.

When a single ripple gets created, it spreads all over the lake.

For example, when Add performed the 2nd time travel and defeated the Wally Robot with everything he had, Demons appeared as if they were waiting. This could be somewhat explained with the Time Wave Theory.

Changing the present using time travel will affect and change the future.

So while he couldn't prevent Eve's destruction the cause of her

destruction was changed. This much was at least acceptable.

"What's wrong, Add?"

But the event Eve pointed out just now had happened further back in the past. It was an event long before from the point where Add time traveled. Yet that event had disappeared.

It was an extremely insignificant event but it wasn't rational.

"No, maybe it can be explained.... Because it was so insignificant."

Add didn't look at Eve and murmured to himself. Since something trivial like Drinking/Not drinking juice was determined by person's mood, trivial events might change whenever he time traveled.

Add struggled to force himself to believe that answer he just thought up was correct but became extremely uneasy. Add began delving in time travel only by chance in the first place. He was still struggling to find a way to go back to his own time. He had various theories but never had any proofs.

Maybe his theory was wrong. Or Eun who said she'd help could be plotting something.

"No, No....."

"Get a hold of yourself."

Something held him all of a sudden. Add wondered what it was and looked down to see a gear that had drove itself into Add's arms.

"I don't know why you lost your mind all of a sudden but that'll be troublesome."

"..."

"Rena specifically appointed you and me just in case some crisis might happen in Elder. Remember this."

As Eve told him prudently, gear in Add's arms also moved up and down. As if it was nodding.

"We have to do our best to protect Elder's citizens. So stay

focused."

"...Are you worried about me?"

"I was never. It was just troublesome for me."

Eve arguing obstinately made Add laugh. To think there will come a day where his experiment was worried about him.... So deplorable.

"I'm fine now. I want to take a walk so let's get up."

"Weren't you gathering the city's information using those?"

Eve asked about how Add wasn't going to use the wide area scouting function. Add shrugged. Well he was planning to use it initially....but.

"Might as well put effort into doing what I'm supposed to do. It wouldn't be bad to move around at least."

Eve must have understood what he meant and stood up as well. Add hesitated internally for a moment then reached his hand out towards Eve.

"?"

"....We'll first start by searching in flight so grab on."

Dyanmo was 1seater so they had to stick close together if Eve were to get on as well. But not only was flying on Dynamos much more effective than walking around, they could also react faster when something happened.

It honestly wasn't because Add had some indecent desires.

"Walking would be better."

"I'm a human so walking around for too long hurts my legs."

Add tried to remain composed as possible as he waved his fingers. He was doubtful whether Eve would take his hand or not.

....If you thought about it, Add had only done things that'd cause Eve to hate him so far. It wouldn't be strange if Eve objected to Add's sound argument.

"It can't be helped."

But Eve.... although reluctantly, grabbed Add's hand. Add's face brightened all of a sudden as he was about to pull Eve in,

Ba-dump

Add's heart beat loudly to warn him. Because Add dealt with spaces, he was able to notice the abnormally much faster than Eve.

"Dimension.... Gate."

Space in front of the fountain broke down and twisted into blackness. And across from it....

"Hold on tight!!"

Mass amount of demons appeared!!

"Wait a moment!"

Add ignored Eve calling out to stop him and ascended rapidly. He had to get out of this area soon as possible.

"Add! Where do you think you're going leaving Elder's citizens behind?"

Eve's indication was correct but Add had no intention of listening to her. Demons? Just why? How are demons appearing in Elder?

Wally was working with the Demons, so you could theorize that there was some sinister device installed in Wally's Castle. So close to 100 demon spawns appearing all at once in the castle could somewhat be explained with this theory.

But did they hide such a device in Elder as well? Just what was going on?

"Add!!"

"Shut up!! We're going to retreat for now!!"

Add wasn't afraid for his own life. Right now, safety of this small girl hanging onto his neck was more important to him than anything else in the world.

Elder's citizens? He didn't care if they all died!!

Add didn't hesitate at all as he tried to run away by flying across the sky.

But..... something was strange.

"Ugh! The altitude!"

It was rising on its own. Dynamos shook unsteadily on their own as if they were being held on by something.

Screee, Screech!!

Dangerous sound was coming from the Dynamos. Just what was it? Add couldn't hide his panic as he scanned the surface.

"Let me off! Are you going to abandon the people?"

"Shut up and stay still!! What they are really aiming for is....!!"

Add's face darkened as he screamed back towards Eve. Dark demons he saw in Wally's Castle, the Shadow Master's minions were preparing to shoot their beams towards the sky.

They are going to get hit directly like this!

"Kugh! Move! Dynamo!!"

I can't just sit here waiting to get hit! Fine! I'll stake everything on this!!

Add ignored the creaking sounds Dynamo's chassis was making and overly increased the output. His masterpiece was making a hazardous scream but this was no time to waver.

I won't let it end like last time!!

"Hold on tight!!"

Add barely managed to escape the levitation force that was restraining the Dynamo and ran away with everything he had. Demons on the ground fully charged up their beams and started to fire them in sequence.

"Kugh!!"

Beams shot out towards the sky without a break in between. But Add dodged them all using a S

shaped gliding maneuver. However, Dynamos were in the end just 1 seater. If he used highly advanced manoeuvres like this... the fellow passenger obviously won't be able to hold on.

"Ah?!"

Strength seemed to leave from Eve's arms that were hugging Add's neck.... Eve started to fall.

Soon as Add saw Eve falling towards the ground he immediately started to descend rapidly without thinking about anything else.

Beams shot up aiming at Add again but there was no more dodging for Add, only a rush across the sky towards Eve.

12 meter from the ground.

"Faster, faster, faster....!"

8 meter from the ground.

"Eve!! Grab my hand!!"

"Add!!"

Eve's face as she fell was pale. Eve also held her hand out towards Add. The two of their hands were barely about to touch.

4 meter from the ground, if Add didn't rise immediately he will also smash into the ground!

"Uwoooooaaaah!!"

But Add didn't choose to rise. He instead chose the emergency landing. He'd rather fall to the ground together with Eve than to let her fall alone and run away by himself!!

Grasp!!

Was Add's desperate wish granted? Add barely managed to snatch

up Eve's hand and quickly pulled her in just as her legs were about to touch the ground. Dynamo that was attempting an emergency landing slipped sideways and lost its balance. The two of them got flung out and rolled on the ground.

Bam!!

The two that fell from the sky finally managed to stop rolling only after they hit a wall.

Add breathed heavily as he checked on Eve beside him. Eve also seemed shocked as she was only blinking with a pale white face.

"Eve, are you okay?"

"...There's no particular abnormality in functions."

Eve was also dripping with dry sweat. Even Eve who self proclaimed to have no emotions must have been scared of freefalling without any safety measures. Well Eve was a Nasod and not a human so even if she were to fall it would have only ended in part destruction for her

"Kukuk, I did something stupid unlike myself again."

Add made an empty smile as he raised himself up by leaning against the wall. He must have hit something as he was rolling on the ground because his ribs were aching. But this wasn't the time to care about his injuries.

Thump, thump!

The Shadow demons were approaching them. Just like Add had seen before, their movements were organized, Chargers in front with Snipers at the back.

'What should I do?'

When Add faced them before in Wally's Castle just protecting himself was the best he could do.

It didn't look like the result would change this time.....and running away was impossible long as there were Snipers.

"I promised Rena that I'd protect people of Elder."

Eve also stood up. Her tone was calm but there was a determined will in her voice. She must have resolved herself to fight.

But they were against 100 Shadow demons. With only two of them fighting, this could only end one way.

"It's impossible with only us."

"Nothing is impossible for Nasods."

"Oh, is that so?"

Add quickly ran his brain. There was only one option left for them. They had to eliminate all of the Snipers in the back line then escape using flight.

Demons won't be able to get in their way then.

"Eve, I'm going to go clear their back line. So keep yourself protected at all costs till then."

"I'll go with you."

"Don't say something stupid. You'll get in my way. I'm the leader so follow my orders."

Add scolded in low voice then took a deep breath. He sugar-coated it as if this was actually a plan....

But what Add was about to do didn't even have 1% chance of succeeding. He already knew how powerful the enemies were from fighting them before.

Soon as Add launched himself behind enemy lines, demons will jump at him like swarm of angry bees. Add won't even last 10 seconds.

"Kukuk....."

Run away using time travel? Accurate time travel was impossible without Eun's assistance so he couldn't use it now. If you used time travel carelessly you could get flown into an unknown time and

space. In the worst case scenario you could become lost in time and end up not even dead or alive.

This was the dead end. Checkmate. They were inside jaws of death.

All his plans of going back to his own timeline shattered into pieces, an ending where in an unknown age, he gets killed by some unknown demons.

But for some reason, Add's heart felt clear.

"Eve."

"Yes."

Add got on his Dynamos and moved forwards.

"Run away."

Add charged in without even listening to Eve's answer.

"Kukuk!! Kahahahaha!!!"

Demons jumped at Add with their fang and claws seeing Add charge at them. Seeing all of their attention divert to Add made him ecstatic.

Because it'll buy time for Eve to run away!!

"Kukukuk!"

Just when the line of demons was about to attack him.... Add lowered his stance and activated the Dynamo's secret ability.

Space Warp.

While it was only for a short distance, this skill realized quantum teleport and granted absolute evasive ability just for a moment. Thanks to this skill Add was able to break through the enemy battle line easily and charge at the Snipers located in the back.

"Void Field!!"

As Add let out a howl, alternate space opened and stopped all

movement around him. Add glared at the Snipers and reached his hand out towards them as he shouted.

"Void Impact!!"

He's not going to use Stardust Shower here. He would have liked to make the plan of running away after defeating all of the snipers succeed if possible. But it was impossible for Add to withstand 100 Shadow demons with his current battle abilities.

That meant what he had to do right now was to by much time as possible, until Eve got away safely!!

"Voi...."

Add was about to shout but his eyes shook widely. Snipers that got restrained by the Void Field were.... All ripped apart with just one Void Impact.

'What?!'

Enemies are weaker than expected? They couldn't even be damaged properly when Add had met them in Wally's Castle But now they were falling helplessly before Add.

"Kukukuk!!"

But Add didn't give himself any room for hope as he expelled an electric charge around him. There were still lots of enemies left and the result wasn't definite. It could have been just a lucky hit that worked because Add had ambushed them.

"Void Breaker!!"

As a test, Add tried gathering slight amount of energy and fired it frontwards. Five distressed demons flew away and dropped dead.

"...A, Amazing!!"

Demons didn't get weaker. Add had become stronger!! He didn't know the reason, but his power to control space, the amount of output he could bring forth from the Dynamo had increased

dramatically.

No time to be delighted. In that case, change of plans!

"Kugh!!"

Just as Add turned around, a beam grazed by Add's face. Sniper that still remained had looked for a chance and shot at him. Add's head would have gotten blown off if he had dodged it late even for a moment.

"Kukukuk!!"

Add let out an excited laugh as the blood dripped down from his cheek. That's right; he still couldn't let his guard down against these demons! But for Add who had initially charged in preparing for death they were all now just laughable.

He obtained the power to defeat the demons. There was nothing to be afraid of now that he had obtained this mighty power to save Eve!!

"Neutron Bomb!!"

Add fired a neutron blast at the Sniper that shot at him. Even the other Snipers that were beside it got caught up in the blast.

Bam!!

But at that moment Add's head rang out in a shock. Shadow Charger had smashed down on him with its fist. Skin on Add's head got ripped off and blood started to drip immediately. It was dangerous if he didn't stop the bleeding quickly.

But Add didn't even look back as he counterattacked by sending out an electric current with the Dynamos. The Shadow demon screamed and exploded.

"Kukukuk! Good! Very good! Who's next?!"

Add wagged his finger to provoke the demons. Demons now hesitated to attack Add. They must have realized that they'd suffer heavy casualties if they attacked Add carelessly.

While his enemies were stopped for moment.... Add quickly scanned for the location of the Snipers.

If things went well, he could sweep through them all in one strike and get away.

With Eve of course.

"Kukukuk, Great!"

Add finished calculating the coordinates that'll allow him to sweep through all the Snipers in just one strike. Just when he was about to release the power of his Dynamos.... Demons that were surrounding Add suddenly opened a single path. Add's eyes instinctively headed towards that direction.

What came into his eyes was Eve who was kneeling, and a blade poised against her neck.

"Eve!!!"

Add threw all his calculations away and ran towards that direction immediately. As if they were waiting him to react like this, forceful hands from all around grabbed Add's legs and arms then pushed his head down on the ground.

"Void Impact!!"

Along with Add's convulsing scream Dynamos tore through the space around Add. Add's body was also inside the target radius so he received a deep wound but he didn't care.

This was no time to stay lying down.

"Eve!!"

Add got up with haste and was about to jump as he screamed spastically. But the man that had the blade against Eve's neck held out his hand.

Dark skin. Red eyes.

A beautiful male, but you could tell with a single glance that he

was a demon. Although he hasn't said anything, the meaning behind the hand he held out was clearly communicated.

I'll kill Eve if you come any closer.

Add stopped his steps and glared at the man. It was obvious that he was the commander of these Shadow demons. You could sense much more power from him than the Shadow Master....!

"Stop already, it's unsightly."

"Let go of Eve! I'm the one you really want! Isn't that right? Dark Count Ran!?"

Add threw out whatever words he could to get the demon's, Ran's attention as he tried to calculate a way out of this situation. Then Add realized what he had just blurted out with haste was actually right on the mark.

That's right.... Demons wouldn't invade Elder without any reason at all. Even if they did, they had no reason to attack only two of them, Add and Eve so relentlessly.

He had it backwards. Demons appeared in Elder.... Aiming for Add and Eve.

"...Damn."

Add repeated the calculations attempting to disprove his own conclusion but wasn't able to do so.

Shadow Master appearing from before wasn't a coincidence at all. It had appeared because Add and Eve were there.

"What you probably want is my technology! So let Eve go safely! I'll cooperate with you if you do that!!"

"Cooperate?"

Ran tilted his head as if he had just heard something amusing. Eve who was restrained by the Shadow demons opened her eyes narrowly and stared at Add.

"A....dd."

"Don't talk Eve, I'll free you right now!!"

"Run away! Add!"

"I told you not to talk!!"

Add couldn't figure out why he was in this situation. Just what was going on? Just how did the demons find out about his time travel ability? But one thing he was sure of was that no matter what happened,

He didn't ever want to see

Eve getting destroyed in front of his eyes again.

This was the only emotion that dominated Add's heart right now.

When Add approached closer, Ran pushed the tip of his blade further into Eve's neck. Add instinctively stopped and furiously glared at Ran.

"I'm going to turn you into a minced meat if you don't put that thing away."

"That's an unusually appealing proposition..... but."

Ran made a smile as he told Add amiably.

"You're mistaken. We didn't come here for you cooperation."

".....What?"

Wasn't Dark Count Ran a demon general? The reason for such an important figure ambushing Elder wasn't to capture Add who knew about the time travel technology better than anyone else in this age?

"What do you mean...."

"It means this."

Slash.

Heart chilling sound of a clashing blade shook dimly across the area. Even though Add saw it happen in front of his eyes.... It took a

while for him to actually realize the truth that Ran had swung his blade and then withdrew it.

Craaack!

Add finally realized that cracks were forming on Eve's Core.

".....Ah."

He just realized that as Eve let out a voice that could either have been a sigh or a cry, her eyes lost focus and her head dropped down.

"E....."

He found out that Eve was destroyed again.

"The reason I came here was for the destruction of Queen of Nasods, by D's orders."

That was just Ran talking to himself as he withdrew his blade. Add wasn't listening. Add was blankly staring at Eve who had her head dropped down. Memories of his past flashed by in Add's head.

It was the same; Eve got destroyed this time again.

It was the same; just like that time, he could only watch as his important person died in front of him.

"U, u....."

His insides were boiling. Nothing mattered anymore!! Even if he had to burn his life out!! He must destroy all the demons in front of him!!

"Void Impact!!""

As Add screamed spastically, alternate space opened around Ran and tore the Shadow demons apart.

But unlike the other demons that got turned into sludge, not even a single hair of Ran was damaged.

For some reason Ran made a mournful face as he stared at Add.

"Was that really the extent of your anger?"

"Shut up!!"

If single strike didn't work I'll use multiple!! Add recklessly stacked Void Impact multiple times to create a clump of alternate space. Because he performed something so forceful that he couldn't do normally, the feedback caused the skin on his body to crack and reveal the bones inside. But none of that mattered right now.

How dare he make him taste the experience of losing something important again! I will never let you leave here alive!!

"Void Impact!!"

The moment when Add was about to explode the Void Impact stacked by 4 times, Ran swung his blade in an exquisite manner. Then unbelievably ...blade Ran had swung cut away the alternate space entirely.

Attack that Add had put his soul into, even by risking damage onto himself, got sealed away with a single swipe of Ran's blade.

"Don't you dare joke with meee!!"

If 4 times didn't work I'll stack 10 in a row!! Barely raising both of his bloodied arms, Add activated the Dynamos again preparing to risk burning away all of his own nerves. But then a forceful arm grabbed his body and crashed his head into the ground.

"Let go!! Let go of me!!"

As the surviving Shadow demons pushed him down, Add desperately struggled to get free. He had to kill that guy no matter what!!

Bash! Bash!!

When Add moved rampantly the demons started to stomp and punch him. It was difficult for Add to withstand with his body already in tatters.

"Kugh!!"

Ran held up his hand as Add spewed out blood from within.

"Stop, D's orders."

All of the Shadow demons let go of Add and backed off at his word. All of the hands that restrained Add were gone now. But Add couldn't even manage to stand up anymore.

Add lay face down breathing frantically. He could see Ran's feet to the side.

"Everyone, we're returning."

"Void...."

He somehow had to.... Before that guy went back... Add barely managed to raise his hand with extreme difficulty but there was a flashing light and then Ran and the demons disappeared without a trace.

Everything became silent.

"Ugh."

The pain finally started to overcome Add and yet he still forced himself to stand up while groaning.

As Add moved his body, blood dripped down his clothes... it was a serious injury.

But Add didn't mind his own body.

He staggered towards fallen Eve.

"Haa..."

Once again, Eve's Core was covered in numerous cracks and had lost its color.

Complete death, stopped functioning due to uncontrollable external shock, well you could say for humans this was akin to being in a coma. So wouldn't Eve open her eyes again if there came a day when the Core miraculously recovered by itself?

"There's no way such thing..... There's no way...."

Add's tightly compressed fists shook violently. He looked down at

Eve who lay with her eyes closed.

He unconsciously let out a short laugh.

"If I had known this would happen.... should I have said those clothes looked good on you?"

His laughter mixed with mutter slowly became louder. Only a dry laugh rang across the empty square in front of the fountain.

Drop, Drop.

As if responding to the laugh, raindrops started to fall. One drop, two drop. It turned into a downpour before long.

"Hahaha, hahahahahaha....."

Boy laughed in the rain. He couldn't bear if he didn't laugh.

Just like that time when he lost something most important to him.

"UWAAAAAAAAHAAAAA!!!!"

His laugh became a scream that tore through the rain.



Add realized he was lying on a bed when he came to. For a moment he wondered if everything that happened was a dream. But that was impossible.

There was no way this dull pain, this rage was fake.

Add abruptly raised himself up as he heard someone speak from besides him.

"It would be better if you stayed lying down. It hasn't been that long since your wounds healed."

It was Ara, no Eun who was peeling an apple with a fruit knife. White hair and the fox ears curling up and down made it certain.

Add sent Eun a burning glare but she didn't stop peeling the fruit.

"I healed the wounds on your body. They called it clairvoyant powers back in the day. It doesn't end with just increasing one's natural healing ability and...."

Add reached out sideways with his hands. Dynamos that stood leaning against a wall at the corner of the room flew towards him. Add scowled at Eun. His eyes were burning violently.

".....You, You knew didn't you?"

"What do you mean?"

"About how Eve, Eve would be destroyed again!!"

That's right. Eun said she could look into the future. She must have known about this future where Eve was destroyed.

It wasn't just this time. She must have known Eve was going to be destroyed....from the start.

There was no doubt about this when you examined every words she told him so far.

Eun nodded without even a hint of denial. Add had expected it to

be true but he clenched his fists because Eun had reacted so clearly.

"I'm on boy's side. What are you curious about?"

"...."

"Boy didn't ask me anything he was curious about. So I didn't particularly tell him."

Let's calm down. Eve wasn't going to come back even if he blew Eun away right now. Not only that, Eun's cooperation was necessary in order to time travel again.

"Where is Eve?"

"In the other room. You could go look if you want."

"...."

"Just dissecting and researching the destroyed Nasod would advance your research greatly."

Add looked at Eun with a fearsome glare but Eun just made a beaming smile.

"Ah, is that so? What you wanted was the Core? Unfortunately, that's been destroyed."

"...Why didn't you tell me beforehand?"

"About what?"

Add's blood pressure was about to soar through the roof after seeing Eun play dumb. If possible, he wanted to hang Eun upside down and torture her until she spat out everything.

But now was the time where he had to suppress his anger and gather information.

"Why didn't you tell me when you already knew Eve would be destroyed?"

"Because nothing would have changed even if I told you."

Eun withdrew her smile and spoke seriously.

"My foresight isn't absolute. Let's see, how shall I explain this? Should I say it's like number of cases?

If one were to say fate is like a dice. I can merely tell which number will come up from the die more precisely than other people."

Eun's tails shook voluptuously.

"If future is a gambling game where the dice called fate is rolled endlessly, lives of the present are the ones that make bets inside the game. Just like you have said, I can give information to those around me and change the future I've seen."

"That's different from what you said before. Just what are...!"

"Boy, have patience. Calm down."

Eun calmly blocked Add from speaking and explained again.

"It takes enormous amount of clairvoyant powers in order to see into things that are not directly related to me. One must pay an equivalent amount of price in order to peek into the secrets of the universe. It's not something you do mindlessly."

"...."

Eun was confessing that even she needed to make great sacrifices in order to see into the future.

"So I make a great effort to peek into the eyes of the dice. Then let those around me know of the results I've seen. But doing so causes a ripple, changing the distribution and the future. Didn't the boy also know what would happen this time around?

"...."

Add had seen Eve be destroyed two times already. That was why he had decided to stay back in Elder this time.

"But how was the result?"

"....Are you saying that Eve getting destroyed is a decided future?"

"No, that's wrong. There is no such thing. But how shall I put this?"

If the normal die of fate is 6

sided, and have 6 unique results..... Girl's fate is a 100 sided dice, and up to 99 are similar results."

It meant there was an extremely high chance that Eve would be destroyed. Eun laughed slightly as Add trembled.

"Everything that is born dies someday and everything that is created is destroyed someday. It is simple flow of the world. The 100 sided dice I mentioned just now also applies to boy's fate as well.

It's the law of mortality."

"Stop with the wordplays. I have.... no intentions of playing around."

Add manipulated his Dynamos after realizing that Eun had taunted him again. Electrical current much more powerful than before sparked out of the Dynamos.

"Do I look like I'm playing around in the boy's eyes? How regretful."

Eun held out a dish containing neatly cut apples towards Add. Eun made a sly smile when Add didn't take it.

"But I also know of a way boy can achieve his goals."

"What is that? Tell me right now....!"

Eun shook the dish up and down slightly when Add angrily pressed for an answer. Add reluctantly accepted the dish because of her gesture that said she'd only talk after he had accepted it.

Eun made a satisfied smile and leaned on her chair as she crossed her legs. Her body was Ara's but one could tell they were completely different individuals by seeing how the lavish aura flowed out of her even when she was sitting still.

"Boy, don't get your priorities mixed up."

"What?"

"What was the reason why the boy wanted the girl? Wasn't it

extortion of the Core?"

Add closed his mouth. That's right, Eun's indication was correct. Didn't he join the El Search Party in order to steal Eve's Core in the first place?

He ended up time traveling because he kept seeing Eve get destroyed before he had the chance to make his move.

"Didn't I tell you? I want to help the boy."

"...Just what do you want to say?"

"Boy should know very well already."

Eun's red eyes gleamed with wickedness.

"Travel through time right now and extort the girl's Core.... Faster than the demons can destroy her. Then the boy's wish will be granted."

"...."

Add's face turned stiff after listening to the voluptuous voice's advice. On the contrary Eun was making a grin.

"Think about it. Although limited, the boy can travel through time with my assistance. No matter how much the girl is guarded against you, or even if other members tried to stop you.... It doesn't matter at all. Try, and if you fail, all you have to do is go back to the past and try again."

"...."

"You can ambush her when she's sleeping, or whenever she lets her guard down. If you fail? All you have to do is go back 5 minutes before. Repeating this, you'll succeed in the end."

What she said was reasonable. All Add had to do was achieve his goal before the demons destroyed Eve.

With Eun's help he could attempt infinitely. Then at some point....He'll obtain Eve's Core.

".....Kukukuk."

Add unconsciously burst out laughing. Eun also laughed along quietly.

"What's your reason for helping me?"

"It's because the future where the boy succeeds is related to my future. Well, how about it? Do you still suspect me? Me, who helped the boy time travel all this time?"

Add didn't answer Eun's smile and closed his eyes. Starting the calculations in order to understand his current situation. Let's do a review.

What Eun said was correct.

Why Eve met with such a fate didn't have anything to do with Add. All Add had to do was steal the Core before it happened.

"Kukuk."

Add created a time space wormhole as he burst out laughing. Eun got up from her seat as if she was waiting.

"Then when will you go back to?"

"Last night, right after Hoffman headed back after finishing his story."

Following Add's words, Eun's hand started to shine with white light.

Wrrrrr

When Add came to, dumbfounded El Search Party members were staring at him.

"Add. Other people will be troubled if you ride that indoors."

"What are you doing all of a sudden?"

"Mr.Add? Is there a problem?"

"....."

Eve didn't say anything and stared at Add quietly. Add looked outside the window to check the approximate time then asked.

"Did Hoffman go back?"

"But Mr.Hoffman wasn't here."

".....What?"

Add's eyes opened widely. Elsword scolded Add.

"What's wrong Add? Did you already forget what we just talked about with that Blacksmith guy?"

"....."

Why did the events from the past change when he time traveled? Add was taken aback at the fact someone other than Hoffman had come to visit. But he decided to remain silent.

From other members' atmosphere and what they were talking about, it looked like the decision to go to the Wally's Castle hadn't changed.

"Alright, Eve. Come with me."

"I'll have to refuse."

Eve spoke back coldly. Add hadn't expected her to refuse instantly like this and was at a loss for words for a while. Seeing this, Rena smiled and pushed Eve's back.

"Rena, don't push."

"Go ahead. Important conversations have to be done privately."

".....I can't understand humans."

Eve got up shaking her head looking like she didn't understand. Add gave Ara an eye gesture before he left the room but Ara only blinked her eyes innocently in response.

Add brought Eve up to the boy's room. He moved out to the balcony and opened the Dynamos around the balcony to create a barrier so that the conversation couldn't be leaked outside.

"What business do you have with me?"

Eve didn't seem too pleased that there were only two of them in this room. Well even if Add thought about it himself..... He didn't recall doing anything that would have pleased her.

No, even if Add did something, it became all nonexistent when he time travelled.

Eve in front of him wasn't Eve that rode on Dynamos and fought together against Wally Robot with him. She wasn't Eve that fought against Shadow Master's minions with him. She also wasn't Eve that conversed with him as they patrolled Elder together.

She was the 4th Eve that didn't know anything.

"What relationship do Nasods have with Demons?"

"I don't understand why you'd ask such a question."

Eve shook her head slightly as she answered. Her hairs fluttered in a cute manner.

"If you had to say so, it'd be a hostile relationship."

".....Is that so."

Add could finally fit all the pieces together.

Why was Eve getting continuously destroyed? The answer was simple. It was because the demons were after her. Wally Robot was built by the Castle's Lord that joined up with the demons. Shadow

Master was obviously a demon and the Dark Count Ran was also a demon.

Demons appeared wherever Eve was located and were trying to destroy her.

Their reason for doing so? Add didn't know the details but it must have been an order from someone called D. Well Eve was a highly ranked Nasod.... They must have a good enough reason.

"I'm going to make a prediction."

"I don't understand. Is it a superstition?"

".....You're going to be destroyed soon."

Add told her calmly but there was no particular change in Eve's expression. Add frowned and explained in detail.

"Demons are after you. You'll be attacked by the demon's assassins tomorrow, or maybe even today or the day after tomorrow!"

"So it's a superstition."

Eve discarded Add's warning as nonsense. It was obvious. Add would have considered them crazy too if someone had told him the same thing.

"They are too powerful. No one can match up to them, not even you or the others."

"You are lying. Although I don't know why you're telling me this lie."

Eve looked like she couldn't understand. Well Add's current actions weren't logical at all. But he still decided to push forward with it.

".....Cooperate with my research"

"I can't understand even more."

"I'm researching time travel. I'm not even a person from this timeline. I'm wanderer of time that jumped to this time from the past

by accident and is desperately trying to get back!"

Eve was now only blinking as she listened to Add yell. Add couldn't tell if she was so taken aback, or that couldn't believe, or both.

Add started to feel that this was a lost cause. But he still didn't give up and spoke.

"If you're really the Queen of Nasods then think about what I just said! What can I possibly hope to gain by lying to you like this? I'd just get treated like a crazy person. Then wouldn't it be fine to try and assume what I said is true?"

"What do you plan to do by researching time travel?"

"...I'll go back to the past."

Add hesitated for a moment but then let out the last part of his word.

"With you."

Time travel using Dynamo was only for one person but it had rooms for modifications. Just like how he flew together with Eve.

Also.... Although it was limited to couple days, if Eun really had the ability to interpret time wave function, he could research that mechanism and somehow make everything work out.

Maybe, possibilities might open up without having to steal Eve's Core.

"I won't go."

"You'll only get attacked by demons if you remain in this time. Do you think I'm lying?"

"Even if it's true I won't go."

Eve refused outright. She ignored the now stunned Add as she spoke coldly.

"I have the mission to revive the Nasod civilization. I have no intention of stopping my search for El, or to travel to a different

timeline."

"....What about the demons that will attack you?"

"Even if what you're talking about is true. I don't think it's something that can be solved by running away. I must face them head on like Nasods should."

Add's heart burned up because he knew all too well the result of what she just said. He just gave her all the information he had. He was even prepared to get treated like a crazy person. Despite all this effort Eve didn't waver.

Even if she believed Add's words her decision wouldn't change. Her course of action was firm.

"....Are you sure it's not because you can't leave Elsword?"

"I don't know why you'd bring up his name here."

Eve's voice suddenly turned rough. Again. Eve's attitude changed completely whenever Elsword was mentioned. Add was about to respond with toxic remarks but stopped himself.

If he said such things he'd only make Eve angry just like before.... And get beat up.

Final persuasion was a failure. Then what's left was....

"Is anyone in there?"

Sound of a door being opened was heard along with footsteps. Add was extremely startled but calmed down soon as he saw that the shadow moving inside the room was Ara.

Ara will now turn into Eun.

Suppressing Eve would be as easy as pie if Eun also joined in Add's heart suddenly sank when he thought about this.

"Ms.Eve?"

Ara who was wandering around the room came out to the balcony and exclaimed. Was it just a coincidence? Ara had her spear in her

hands.

"We were just talking for a bit."

Eve answered but what she just said didn't leak outside because of the barrier. Add suppressed his uneasy heart and tried to read Ara's actions. Ara tilted her head and asked.

"Could it be that... I made some mistake again?"

"...."

She's not turning into Eun? Come to think of it, every time Add met Eun was during late night after sun had gone down completely. Was her appearance restricted by time of the day?

Add stared at Ara with complex feelings but Eve turned around coldly.

"I'll head back now if you're done."

Eve left the balcony making silent footsteps. Seeing Add let out an ambiguous sigh Ara asked confusedly.

"C, Could it be I got in your way by coming in?"

"That's not it...."

Eun must be asleep. Just when had Add assumed so and shook his head, Ara's eyes suddenly narrowed as she took off her hairpin.

Her hair turned white and the tone of her voice changed.

"Oops, I must have got in the way of the boy's good time."

"...."

Add was spooked because Eun had popped out soon as he thought she was not there. Eun curled up her hands like a cat and lightly scratched the air.

"It looked like you were about to attack Eve by yourself. Why didn't you invite me as well?"

".....Why are you showing up now?"

"Hm, I was busy with something. Then should I tell Ara to call Eve outside late at night? She'll probably come out if Ara asks. She won't be able to resist if the boy attacks her then."

She was correct. But.....

"I don't feel up to it today. You can go back."

Add shook his head as he left the balcony. He saw that Eun was making a strange smile but ignored her on purpose.

He really didn't feel up to it right now.

Night.

Add let out a sigh as he lay on the bed. Persuading Eve was a failure as well. Now there was.... really no choice but to do what Eun had suggested.

To make his move and obtain Eve's core before the demons destroyed Eve. It was a piece of cake for Add who could now perform limited time travel with Eun's help.

"Sigh....."

"Big brother Add, are you not going to sleep?"

Elsword who lay on the bed across the room started a conversation. There was only Add and Elsword inside the boy's bedroom without Raven.

Still, Add hadn't expected Elsword to start talking to him. Wasn't this the first time Add spoke with Elsword in private since the day they camped out where Add had provoked him?

"I can't sleep."

Add pondered if he should ignore him but answered bluntly instead. Add needed someone he could talk to even if that someone was Elsword.

So that Add could clear up his complicated feelings.

"Is it because you're worried about tomorrow? You're strong so it

will be fine."

"....."

Elsword must have thought Add was worried about going to the Underground Waterway tomorrow.

Well wasn't that kind of him....but what he just said only disturbed Add's mind.

Strong? Who is?

If I was really strong..... I wouldn't have lost someone important to me in front of my eyes!!!

"Yea, I'm stronger than you. But there's absolutely no use in becoming stronger. There are things that can't be done..... No matter how much I run amok."

".....There's absolutely no use?"

"There are stronger people in this world, or they could come at you in numbers. So just getting stronger doesn't mean it's the end of all your problems. I'm not being modest, this is resignation."

As Add lay he stretched his arm out towards the ceiling. That hand obviously didn't reach.

"Nothing will change. No matter how strong I become I'll just continue to lose."

".....You're saying something difficult."

"You don't have to listen. You won't be able to remember anyways."

Add will time travel again and this conversation will become nonexistent as well. There was a rustling noise and then Elsword sat on his bed.

"There are things that change if you become stronger."

"Kukuk, nonsense. I'm saying this as someone who's stronger than you. You'll figure it out too once you become strong as me.

That is.... if that day ever comes."

Add was jeering then closed his mouth. Honestly, Elsword's future wasn't too bright either.

Didn't Elsword get covered in blood as he fell to the Shadow Master's attack? Add hadn't checked if Elsword survived but even if he wasn't killed immediately he would have received a critical wound.

Long as the demons were after Eve, Elsword who was with her was also exposed to the same danger.

"No, I know someone who's stronger than you. That person told me. You can change if you become stronger. That you desire to become stronger because you want to change."

Elsword spoke with a force in his voice. Those words came from a young boy but they were righteous words that didn't waver.

"If you want to change you can become stronger, if you want to become stronger you will change."

"....Bunch of gibberish."

"I don't understand too much because it's too difficult for me. But I know for sure that this is true.

Rena said it was true and Ara did as well. Eve did too."

"....."

Geez, this guy was really popular amongst this group. Add let out a tired sigh.

Elsword mentioning Eve at the end really got on Add nerves but he decided to let it slide.

"Don't you want to become stronger anymore? Don't you want to change?"

"...You're too noisy."

Add turned his back around and covered himself fully inside the

blanket. Everything became dark as Add closed his eyes, but what Elsword said strangely bugged his ears.

What's the point in becoming stronger? Triumphant that he had become stronger, Add even risked his own life attacking Ran. But he couldn't even touch a single strand of Ran's hair. If Ran was that strong.... Then D must be even stronger.

Protect Eve from the grasp of such powerful demons? Outrageous. It was hundred times better to just cooperate with Eun and steal Eve's Core.

Yes, hundred times better.

"Tch.....!"

That's what he thought.... But Elsword's words didn't leave his ears.

'Do you want to change? That's.....'

It was a night where the answer didn't come easily.

Next day morning.

Add didn't want to get up. Add rolled up in his bed and dove deep into the blanket.

"Big brother Add? Aren't you going to get up? We should get ready to go soon."

"I'm not feeling well. I'm not going today."

When Add declared bluntly Elsword left the room looking confused. When the room became empty Add let out a thin sigh.

He sighed as he wriggled his fingers.

"Just what am I hesitating for...?"

Shouldn't he steal Eve's core soon as possible and use that to obtain the technology to safely go back to the past? The moment to execute the plan Add had always dreamed of had come. But for some reason he didn't feel up to it.

Well if he could time travel repeatedly anyways....was there a problem with him lazing around for a bit? Add basically had infinite time on his hands right now.

So he wouldn't lose anything staying inside the bed and not doing anything for the entire day.

"Tired....."

He couldn't sleep last night. And because he kept seeing Eve get destroyed for last couple days, (Although this expression wasn't quite accurate because he had time traveled) his mind wasn't doing too well. He was also physically exhausted because he had to repeatedly fight high class demons.

He was exhausted both mentally and physically even though Eun had supposedly healed him.

Clack.

Just when Add was about to close his eyes and tried to sleep, he heard the sound of a door opening.

Light footsteps, it was Rena.

"Add are you not feeling well?"

".....Yes."

Add answered as he curled himself up even further. He didn't want to see Rena's face right now. No, he didn't want to see anyone's face right now.

He just wanted to close his eyes and be left alone.

"Do you need anything?"

".....No. I'll follow you guys when I get better. So go ahead without me."

Add spoke about something he didn't intend to do. He was just going to get a good rest, ignore other members being in danger from the demon attack....then get Eun's help and go back to the past.

When should he go back to this time? Should the day when El Search Party was formed be okay?

"Alright, come if you change your mind."

"....."

Rena spoke calmly and left the room. She didn't force Add to come despite knowing perfectly well that he was faking his illness.

Add let out a long sigh and closed his eyes. He felt a bit sorry for Rena.... But this event would cease to exist as well.

Let's just fall asleep.

Nothing would have changed.....when he woke up. But he just wanted to rest.

Clack.

Just when Add's consciousness was fading, the sound of a door being opened was heard again. Add was too drunk in his sleep to identify whose footstep it was.

"....."

It sounded like the person hesitated for a moment then slowly walked out of the room. Sound of the door closing courteously, the person's footsteps drifted apart.

The sound felt nostalgic.

It was Eve's footsteps.

"....."

Add opened his eyes abruptly soon as he realized this. Sleepiness instantly disappeared and his mind was awake. Add got up from the bed without a thought and looked around the room.

Eve was already gone. Add was about to quickly run towards the door but stopped. This was certainly unexpected. But what was the point of meeting her right now? Same things will just repeat again.

"By demons or....."

Add muttered to himself with resignation in his voice. His gaze turned towards then remained on the top of the 3 shelf drawer. Something that wasn't there last night had appeared.

A cup filled with lemonade.

"What....."

At a loss for words, Add looked down at the lemonade. There was no way Elsword had brought it here. What that guy liked was apple juice.

"Seriously, what the heck....."

Add let out a hollow laugh as he lifted the lemonade up. His gaze turned towards the white note that was stuck below the cup.

I don't understand what you said yesterday.

But thank you for worrying about me.

I'll try to be careful.

Take good care of yourself.

A neat, calculated handwriting. It didn't say the writer's name but you could tell instantly who wrote it.

"What the heck? Are you an idiot? Kukukuk, are you an idiot?"

Add made a hollow laugh as he grabbed the tip of the note and shook it up and down. It was so nonsensical that all he could do was laugh.

"Are you an idiot? Wouldn't it be normal for you to not go if you were going to believe me? Or even just cooperate with me. Saying thank you when you don't even believe me? That's illogical.

You keep proclaiming to yourself that you don't have any emotions yet you're doing stupid things like this....."

Add's body shook lightly. It wasn't only because he was laughing.

"Kukukuk, Nasods paying humans a get well visit? The world must be ending. My name is going to get carved in history. Kukukuk."

Add swallowed his sigh multiple times. His head was feeling dizzy.

"It doesn't make sense. You're a masterpiece that I acknowledged. Why are you doing something that doesn't make sense like this? Do something that's more believable if you're going to write off what I rambled about yesterday as a simple worry. I....."

Add muttered words that no one would hear. Then he slowly brought the lemonade to his mouth.

It was disgustingly sour.

"It's sour. Just why do you....like this stuff?"

It was so sour that he could cry. So sour that tears really gathered in his eyes.

"Are you an idiot? Seriously. Kukukuk. Huh? You give it to me because you like it? People all have different tastes. I absolutely hate sour things....."

Add drank it without leaving a drop despite what he just said. Add's fists shook as he stared down at the now clean empty cup.

It shook because his hand was crushing the cup.

"I absolutely hate stuff like this..... I absolutely hate it when someone worries about me."

That's right, he was alone. He didn't care what happened to the El Search Party. He only wanted Eve's Core.

He did.

"I....."

Add bit his lower lip with a force that almost made them bleed. His eyes were still blurry from the sour taste that still remained at the tip of his tongue.

".....Eve"

He became assured soon as he called her name. His feeling made the conclusion before his reason could. He couldn't take this lying

down.

"Don't make me laugh. How dare you not believe what I say? Fine, I'm going to go watch your pompous face turn pale with fear."

Add put on his hood and bit his lip.

"You'll find out what I said was true when you get cornered by the demons, so...."

He just had to rescue Eve at that moment and get her to properly cooperate. It was something illogical, it was something that took too much effort, but Add really wanted to do it right now.

He'll only be gratified if that pompous Eve thanked him honestly from the bottom of her heart.

He'll only be convinced if her gaze that only looked at Elsword turned towards him.

"Just you wait!! Eve!!"

Add ran out with a force that almost broke the door. He was planning to catch up to the group right away using Dynamo's flight.

But as Add came out of the room he stopped. Ara was standing in the corridor leaning against the wall.

Correction, Ara's white hair, pointy fox ears on top of her head.

Eun was standing there.

"Alright, Boy. What time will you travel to now?"

"I don't need it. I'm going after the Eve from right now."

When Add glared at her, Eun giggled then nodded.

"Then we can go together. I'm not going to stop the boy. Even though he's going to see the same result again."

"Are you saying that I'll fail again?"

Eun substituted her answer with a shrug.

"I just proposed a way to help the boy. Boy is free to choose.

Whether he wants to see the girl get destroyed again, the choice is up to the boy."

"Me failing is a certain truth....?"

Add stopped speaking. Something was strange.

Sense that something was out of place.

The same sense of incompatibility that he felt ever since he saw Eun for the first time.

".....Hey."

He couldn't tell if Eun was good or evil. Ara said she was a Celestial spirit but in Add's point of view she was a wily beast no better than the demons. Despite which answer was true, Add had let things pass so far because she said she'd help.

".....You, just what are you?"

It was something he should have made sure of from the start.

"I am Eun, a frost fox that sees the future."

"You.... Didn't tell me the truth from the start."

Eun smiled voluptuously as she shook her tails.

"Are you suspecting me? How cruel. Didn't boy already find out I was on boy's side when I helped him with the time travels?"

"You may not have told any lies. But....there's parts you didn't speak about."

Eun continued to smile despite the sudden interrogation that was put upon her.

"What are you saying all of a sudden, boy?"

"It was strange from the start. You suddenly said you wanted to help me. I thought it was because you could see the future. That it was because I was related to your future."

But that was impossible.

"But that doesn't make sense at all. When I become able to freely control time travel, the time I'm going back to is the past. There's no way I'd be in the future after that point."

So there was absolutely no reason for Eun to help Add. That wasn't everything. Eun always.....knew everything perfectly.

Too perfectly.

"In addition, you said it yourself that looking into the future unrelated to you consumes enormous amount of clairvoyant powers."

"I did. Is there a problem with that?"

"But how do you know about the future where Eve gets destroyed? Judging by how you appeared subtly in the last timeline right after we who remained in Elder got attacked by the demons, you already knew."

Add protested sharply. Smile disappeared from Eun's face.

"Just like you said, it's more reasonable for me to go back to the past and attempt stealing the Core.

That means you had absolutely no reason to waste your clairvoyant powers and peek into Eve's future!!"

"....."

"But you are telling me Eve getting destroyed is already an established fact. As if you already knew!!"

That's right. That's how it was from the start. This entire story would have changed completely if Eun had told Add from the start that she could help him with time travel.

But Eun only revealed this fact after Add had witnessed Eve getting destroyed.

"Just what is your goal?!!"

Eun's goal wasn't to blindly help Add. Add didn't know the truth,

but Eve's destruction, and making Add witness her destruction was probably in her plans as well.

When Add glared at her, Eun scratched her hair and then sighed.

"I should be more careful from now on. I never expected the boy to attack through loopholes like this so composedly."

Eun's eyes seemed to narrow then she fixed the grip on her spear. Add interpreted this as a battle pose and tensed up. But Eun held out her other hand towards Add instead.

"Boy, as I said before I'm on boy's side. So you don't have to be so tense."

"Don't make me laugh. Until I find out your true goals.... I can never trust you."

He couldn't trust Eun anymore. Just seeing how Eun had pushed Add on to repeatedly witness Eve's destruction was enough to make Add's heart uneasy.

"My goals? Will you be able to believe it even if I told you, boy?"

Eun spoke then lightly waved her empty hand.

"How was the girl's reaction yesterday when you blindly told her the truth? She didn't believe and went on her way. I don't think the boy would be any different."

"It's up to me to decide whether to believe or not. And Eve...."

Add touched the note he stuck in his chest pocket with his fingertips. She didn't believe him, but she also didn't blatantly suspect him.

That lemonade was so sour that it made him shed tears..... But it was still tasty.

"Don't you dare talk about her like that."

"I'm sorry if I made you angry. But before I start talking, you'll have to promise me one thing."

".....What is it?"

"It's very simple. Promise me that you'll try to resolve this situation together with me. There's no point in me talking if you don't do this."

Add looked suspiciously at Eun. But Eun lightly closed her fingers then opened them. Her white hand looked very soft.

Will I be able to find out the truth if I grabbed this hand? About what the heck was going on?

About why Eve had to end up like that?

"I don't know if you're some Celestial spirit or wily beast....."

That's right, Add didn't care an inch about Eun's identity or her goals. He just had to know. Why did these events keep happening?

He had to know what was going on so he could break through this situation. For that he could even join hands with a demon.

"I'll cooperate."

Eun added an ominous lead soon as Add grabbed the hand she held out to him.

"You're going to regret saying that starting now."

"Then I'll just go back in time again."

Eun burst out laughing at Add's curtly counter. After making a sneer that you couldn't tell who it was directed to, the girl spoke coldly.

"Congratulations boy, for opening your eyes to the truth of this broken world."

The fox smiled.

"Again, you'll despair and collapse. Again, I'll have to watch you like that and won't be able to do anything. Welcome aboard once more to this vacant rotating wheel of ruin and despair."

It was a prophecy of despair.

"For we're all mere beasts crying out after falling into the depths of hell....."

It was a prophecy of sympathy.

"Now boy, try to hold out much as you can."

It was the true beginning of a fight that transcended time.

[Elsword | Time Trouble] Volume 1 End



Credits:

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